DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 128 109 RC 004 977


AUTHOR Malan, Vernon D.

TITLE The Dakota Indian Family. Community Studies on the Pine Ridge Reservation. South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 470, May 1958.


INSTITUTION South Dakota State Univ., Brookings. Agricultural Experiment Station.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO SD-AES-Bull-470
PUB DATE May 58
NOTE 72p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Acculturation; Community Change; *Community Study; Cultural Events; *Cultural Factors; *Family (Sociological Unit); Family Characteristics; Family Structure; Group Membership; Local History; Marriage; Moral Values; *Reservations (Indian); Sex Role; Social History; Sociocultural Patterns; *Socioeconomic Influences; Tribes
IDENTIFIERS *Sioux (Dakotas); *South Dakota (Pine Ridge Reservation)



ABSTRACT

The traditional kinship organization of the Dakota Indians was compared with contemporary patterns of family living on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Effects of the cultural change on the economic and social conditions of the present day Pine Ridge Indians were evaluated. The study revealed remnants of the traditional kinship pattern and the nature of the changes which had taken place in the family organization during the transitional process, and offered suggestions to guide the direction of future change on the reservation. Three communities, located in a contiguous area on the Pine Ridge Reservation, were characterized as traditional, transitional, and transpositional. During the summers of 1956 and 1957, information on 86 families from these communities was gathered, using a series of previously prepared questions. Among the findings were: the traditional community had the smallest average family size and number of children per family and had most nearly retained elements of the Dakota kinship pattern; in the transitional community, over half of the families were broken by divorce, separation, or death; the transpositional community had the largest average family size and number of children per family and had most fully accepted a non-Indian family system resembling that in non-reservation areas; and although changes in Dakota culture were tremendous, many child-rearing practices and sharing patterns were retained. (NQ)

Bulletin 470 May 1958

RURAL SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

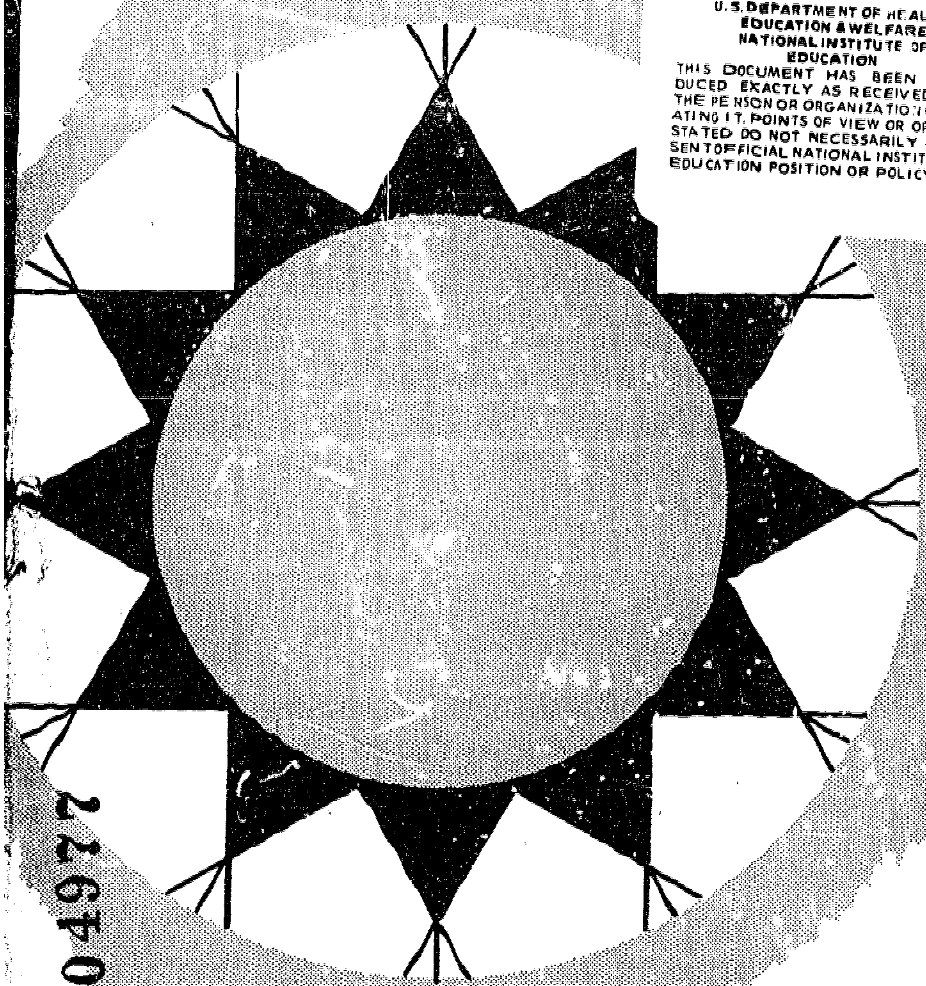
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE, BROOKINGS





# THE DAKOTA INDIAN FAMILY





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# The DAKOTA INDIAN FAMILY

**Community Studies on the Pine Ridge Reservation**



VERNON D. MALAN[1]

## I. Goals of the Study

The Pine Ridge Indians of South Dakota provide a unique opportunity for the sociological study of families undergoing cultural transition.[2] The major goal of this bulletin is to describe the traditional kinship[3] organization of the Dakota Indians[4] and to compare it with contemporary patterns of family living on the Pine Ridge Reservation. This study of the family in selected reservation communities should reveal: (1) any remnants of the traditional kinship pattern operating at the present time, and (2) the nature of the changes which have taken place in the family organization during the process of transition.

An attempt will be made to evaluate some of the results of the cultural change on the economic and social conditions of the present day Pine Ridge Indians. Specifically, changes in family organization have been associated with other economic and social conditions which will be described and explained. The secondary goal of this study then is to offer suggestions to guide the direction of future change on the reservation. Such suggestions will be designed to permit the perfection of these changes with a minimum of personal and social disorganization.

[1]Associate Rural Sociologist, South Dakota State College Agricultural Experiment Station.

[2]Cultural transition or cultural change is a general process embracing all of the readjustments of a minority ethnic group such as the Dakota Indians as they shift from their traditional ways of living to the practices of the dominant society.

[3]In this bulletin the term kinship will refer to the large group of individuals related by blood or marriage which was recognized as constituting the traditional Indian family. The smaller unit typical of our society, usually including husband, wife, and off-spring, will be referred to as a nuclear family.

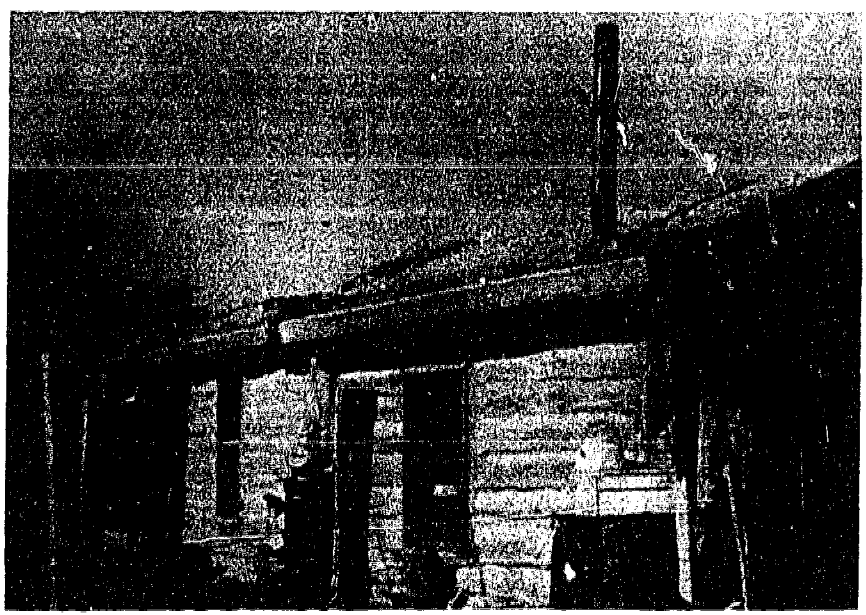
[4]Dakota Indians will refer in this study to ancestors of the Indians now located on reservations in South Dakota. Most of the descriptive material in this bulletin will be taken from accounts of the kinship organization of the Western or Teton Dakotas at the time of their first contacts with Western Civilization.

government were accepted by the reservation residents without much difficulty. As long as the Indians were permitted to live in their kinship neighborhoods, they were willing to accept the cookstoves and other equipment issued by the agent, and they even adopted some of the practices of the non-Indians. They were frequently discouraged and confused, and sometimes amused, by the inconsistent and unworkable policies formulated by the government to speed their assimilation. These inconveniences could be endured or ignored as long as they did not interfere with activities of the kinship groups in their close-knit communities.

There are a large number of these small rural communities today scattered along the wooded streams on the Pine Ridge Reservation. In some of the communities, churches or schools have been established to serve the local people, but they are not as important as kinship ties in holding the community together. The small, caulked log cabins and frame shacks are irregularly spaced along the creek. In some places two or more cabins are clustered on the same homestead, while in others a solitary residence may be situated several miles from the nearest neighbor.

The great majority of homes have one or two rooms and are very crudely furnished. Many of the cabins are poorly constructed and may be difficult to heat during the winter months. The roofs are usu-

**Many of the Indian homes are one-room log cabins.**



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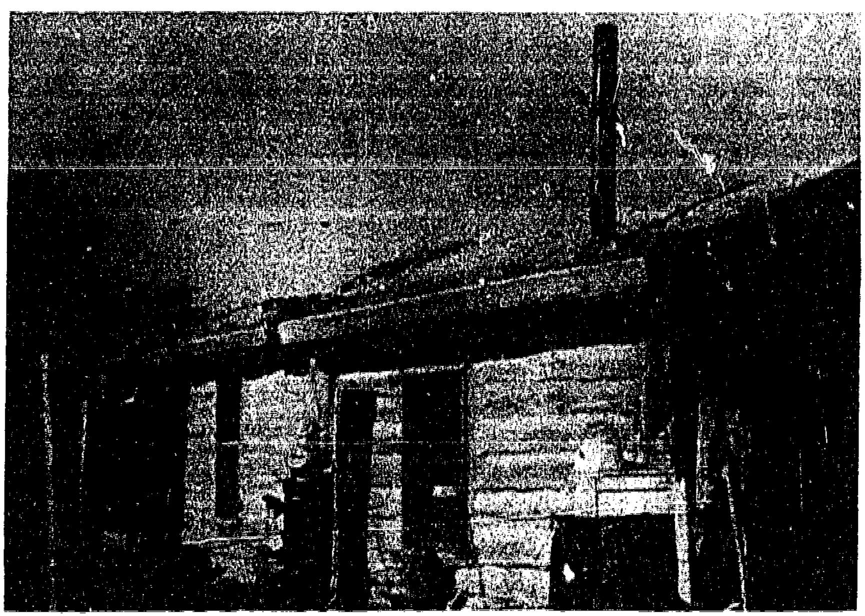


ally made of rough planks covered with tarpaper or sod. The main room is used for all household functions, especially eating, sleeping, and visiting. A stove is likely to have a central location in the room and may be used for cooking as well as heating.

The homestead is likely to have a shade, one or more mail-order wall tents, a corral, a root cellar, and an outhouse located in the vicinity of the cabin. The shade is used in the summer in much the same way as the cabin in the winter, for a variety of household activities. Some protection from the elements, especially from the hot noon-day sun, is afforded by the shade which is constructed with pine boughs placed on a frame supported by four corner poles. Tents are used for sleeping in both summer and winter, and most frequently when the cabins become uncomfortable, overcrowded, or when relatives come visiting. The corral may contain a few horses used for riding or working, although it is often empty since livestock is customarily permitted to run on the acreage owned by the family. Odd pieces of equipment, bodies and motors from wrecked cars, and considerable debris are usually scattered about the homestead. And quite frequently the whole place is surrounded by a fence badly in need of repair.

These homesteads are connected by trails consisting of two ruts and a high center. They usually have a noticeable amount of use from relatives visiting back and forth. Most of the communities are located near a dirt or gravel road connecting reservation villages, and the road may be also used as a school bus route. The houses are likely to be located at least 100 yards from this road, and in some cases several miles. The nearest paved highway is U. S. 18, which runs through the southern edge of the reservation, and is more than 50 miles from some of the more isolated reservation communities. During the winter months the roads are treacherous, if not impassable, and many families depend on horse-drawn wagons during this season for traveling.

Small rural villages are located at strategic points throughout the Pine Ridge Reservation. Here are available a limited number of economic services. The most important is that afforded by the general store or trading post which has a virtual monopoly on the sale of most consumer goods—particularly groceries and other daily household needs. One or two service stations or garages and a small restaurant are likely to be the only other business establishments in the village. A number of government buildings and homes are usually situated in the villages centered around a well-constructed government day school. One or more churches may be found among the shacks which are randomly located in the general vicinity of the trading post and school.

The population on the Pine Ridge Reservation has tended to increase in the last 50 years. There was a steady increase in total reservation

population from 6,619 in 1900 to 8,370 in 1934.[6] In the latter part of the 1930's and the early 1940's the reservation population declined somewhat because of depression and war, but since 1946 there has been a population increase. The birth rate has remained relatively high; thus the growth of population has been largely a result of decreased infant mortality and increased life expectancy. The average family size is a little more than four members since there are about 1,900 families making up the estimated 7,700 population. Sixty percent of the population is over 21 years of age. In the marriageable age group there are approximately 120 females for every 100 males. The Indians of pure Dakota extraction are estimated at about 40% of the total population.[7]

**The Communities Surveyed**— The interviewing for this study was done during the summers of 1956 and 1957. A field worker and an interpreter asked a series of previously prepared questions and gathered as much information as possible on each family. The three communities in which intensive interviewing was carried out are all located in a contiguous area on the Pine Ridge Reservation. A map indicating the location of families from which interviews were obtained is presented in figure 1. These communities have been characterized as traditional, transitional, and transpositional for reasons which will be apparent from the following separate descriptions of each community.[8]

*Traditional Community*—Of the three communities this one exhibited the greatest resistance to acceptance of non-Indian cultural values, and was classified as a traditional community. There were several indices which seemed to indicate a lower rate of acculturation among the 28 families in the community (table 1): (1) the educational level was low; (2) the scores on the socioeconomic scale averaged low; and (3) the percent of adults of pure Indian extraction was high in comparison with the other two communities.

The adult males had achieved a slightly higher educational level in terms of grades completed than the adult females (5.84 years to 5.12 years). The average for both adults and children was 4.32 years. The educational level of the children, of course, will depend in some degree on their age. The educational achievement of children at various ages is reported in table 2.

Measurement of socioeconomic status was attempted by the use of the short form of the Sewell Socioeconomic Status Scale for farm families.[9] On this scale the average

[6] Land Planning Committee, *Indian Land Tenure, Economic Status, and Population Trends,* page 67.

[7] Warren Cardwell, *An Introduction to the Modern Oglala Sioux,* page 11.

[8] The method of this study can not be included in this bulletin, but a mimeographed description is available from the Rural Sociology Department, South Dakota State College.

[9] William H. Sewell, "A Short Form of the Farm Family Socioeconomic Status Scale," *Rural Sociology,* (Vol. VIII), 1943, pages 161-170.

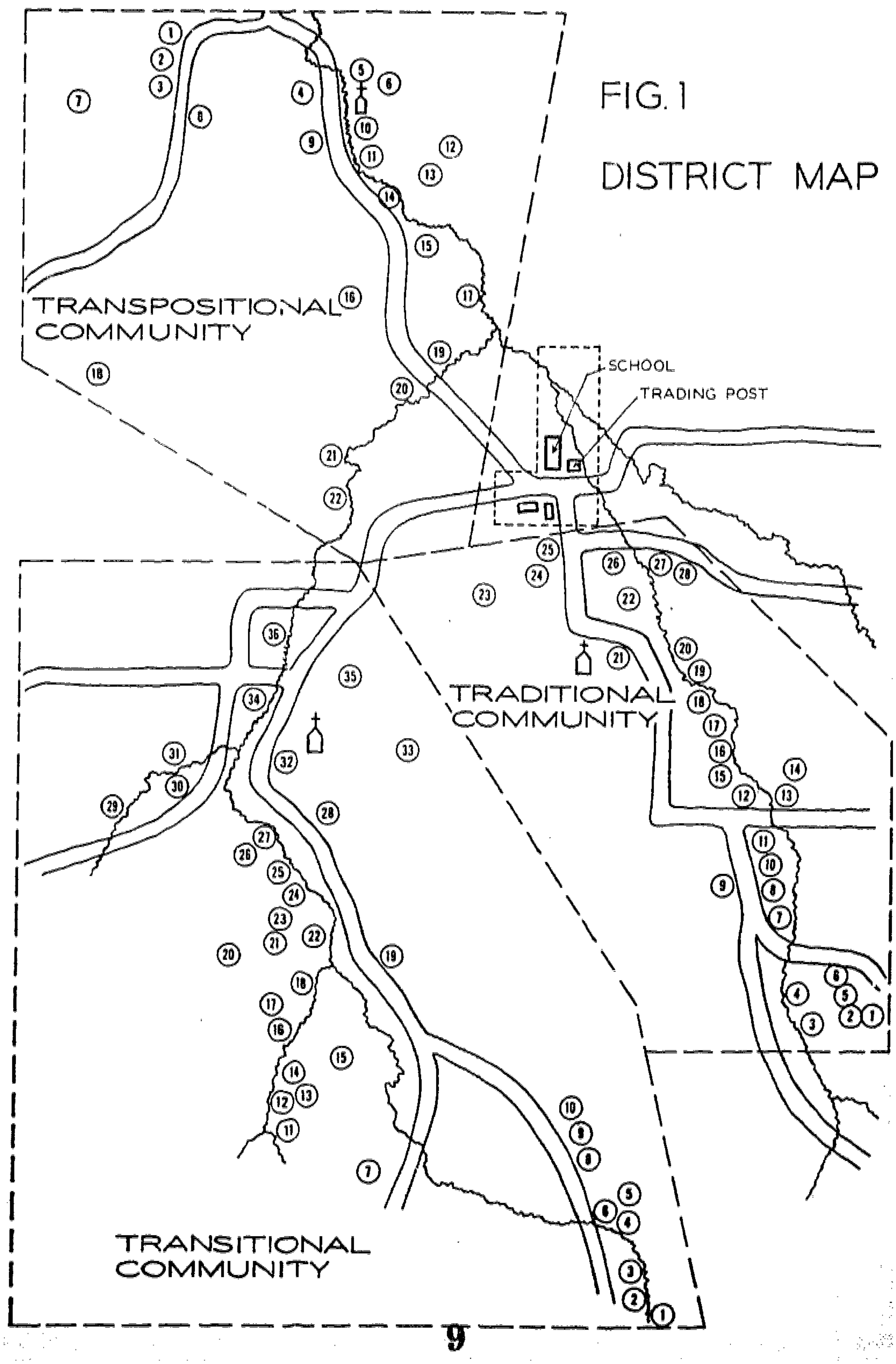


FIG. 1
DISTRICT MAP
TRANSPOSITIONAL COMMUNITY
SCHOOL
TRADING POST
TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY
TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY

**Table 1. Indices of Acculturation**

| | Years of Education | Socioeconomic Score | Pure Indian Extraction (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Traditional Community** | 4.32 | 47.8 | 89.8 |
| Husband | 5.84 | | 92.0 |
| Wife | 5.12 | | 87.5 |
| **Transitional Community** | 5.64 | 51.5 | 64.3 |
| Husband | 6.70 | | 63.0 |
| Wife | 6.68 | | 65.5 |
| **Transpositional Community** | 5.99 | 53.5 | 53.8 |
| Husband | 7.75 | | 50.0 |
| Wife | 7.58 | | 57.9 |

**Table 2. Educational Achievement of Children**

| | Age 0-5 | Age 6-10 | | | Age 11-13 | | | Age Over 16 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communities | No. of Pre-School Children | No. | Avg. Grade | % Completed 2nd Grade | No. | Avg. Grade | % Completed 6th Grade | No. | Avg. Grade | % Completed 8th Grade |
| Traditional | 21 | 9 | 1.8 | 66.8 | 11 | 5.1 | 36.4 | 14 | 7.6 | 64.3 |
| Transitional | 17 | 23 | 2.2 | 69.6 | 26 | 6.4 | 69.2 | 30 | 8.8 | 80.0 |
| Transpositional | 13 | 18 | 3.1 | 83.3 | 12 | 6.7 | 76.7 | 17 | 9.6 | 94.1 |
| **Totals** | **51** | **50** | **2.4** | **73.2** | **49** | **6.1** | **60.8** | **26** | **9.2** | **92.1** |

family score for the traditional community was 47.8, indicating a level of living much below the average farm family.[10] This was apparent from the total lack of electricity, telephones, running water, and other conveniences in the home, and the limited space in the living quarters.

The percent of adults of pure Indian extraction (92.0 for males and 87.5 for females) seemed to justify its description as a "full-blood community" by the people in the area. However, this description also seemed to connote the attitude of the residents toward culture change. It is likely that efforts by members of the traditional community to retain certain elements of the ancient Dakota culture are more a result of community values and sanctions than any physical or biological characteristic of the people. Although high degree of Indian blood and resistance to acculturation are frequently observed to appear concurrently, the exceptional cases indicate that the rela-

[10] Although no comprehensive comparisons were undertaken, it appears reasonable to estimate that the average farm family in South Dakota would score between 70 and 75 on the short form on the Sewell Socioeconomic Status Scale. Since this scale was standardized for non-Indian families, it may not be very accurate in distinguishing differences in low-income Indian communities.

tionship between these two factors is not direct.

The use of land for agriculture is an additional consideration in understanding the traditional community. Most of the land on the flats along the creek valley in which the community is located is used for grazing. Occasional attempts are made to raise small grains and vegetables in favorable situations. While 71.4% of the families owned some grazing land, only 32.1% owned land suitable for other farming practices. Nearly a fourth of the families owned no land of any kind, either grazing or farming. The other three-fourths owned some land, but much of it was leased to non-Indian cattle operators. More than half of the families (57.1%) were unable to raise cattle or crops. The rest were using an average of about 105 acres which is grossly inadequate in that part of the country. The average land ownership for each family was about 350 acres, but nearly 90% of the land was leased, and only a little over 10% was used by the owner. The trend in the land use is also apparent from the fact that in the last 5 years each family has lost an average of 165 acres through sale or lease, while the land gained has been negligible (table 3).

*Transitional Community* – On the three measures of acculturation, the 36 families in the transitional community were intermediate between the traditional and transpositional communities (table 1). The average grade achieved was 5.64 for both adults and children. It was 6.70 for adult males and 6.68 for adult females. The average family score on the socioeconomic scale was 51.5, indicating some increase over the traditional community in level of living. The group of pure Indian extraction constituted 64.3% of the adults, and the percentages were 63.0 for husbands and 65.5 for wives. On the basis of these indices of acculturation this community was classified as transitional between the traditional culture and the reservation adaptation to the western regional culture.

The land use situation in the transitional community is similar to conditions in the traditional com-

**Table 3. Land Ownership, Utilization, and Alienation**

| | Ownership | | Utilization | | | Alienation* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communities | Percent of Families | Average Acres | Average Acres Utilized | Average Acres Leased | Percent | Average Acres Lost | Average Acres Gained |
| Traditional | 78.0 | 350.8 | 105.0 | 305.8 | 42.9 | 165.0 | 2.1 |
| Transitional | 75.0 | 271.0 | 225.6 | 158.2 | 50.0 | 120.0 | 26.9 |
| Transpositional | 86.4 | 439.3 | 384.8 | 194.4 | 59.1 | 280.0 | 9.3 |
| **Average of Communities** | **79.8** | **353.7** | **238.5** | **219.5** | **50.7** | **188.3** | **12.8** |

*Last 5 years.

**Some families utilize tents for either temporary or permanent housing.**

munity. Although each family owned less land on the average, they did utilize the land to a slightly greater extent (table 3). Three-fourths of the families owned some grazing land and one-fourth, some farming land. Since those who owned farming land also owned grazing land, one-fourth of the families were landless. About one-half of the families were making an attempt to farm at least a part of their land. They were utilizing an average of 225 acres per family. When the land owned is averaged for all the residents the result is 271 acres. Less than one-half of the total acreage is leased to non-Indian ranchers. Land losses in the last 5 years have averaged 120 acres, and they have gained a little over 25 acres per family.

*Transpositional Community*—The 22 families living in this community appear to have the highest rate of acculturation on the indices reported in table 1. The average grade achieved was 7.75 for husband, 7.58 for wives, and 5.99 for everyone. Average score on the socioeconomic scale was 53.5, slightly higher than in the first two communities. Fifty percent of the husbands and 57.9% of the wives were of pure Indian extraction. The total of 53.8% of all adults in the "full-blood" category is lowest of the three communities. This community was classified as transpositional because it appeared to have nearly completed the change to the western regional culture, although occupying a somewhat different position because of reservation location and conditions.

Land ownership and use increased in the transpositional community as shown in table 3. More families had some land (86.4%). All of these owned some grazing land, and about one-third of them owned some farming land. Only 13.6% of the families were landless. Nearly 60% of the land owned was worked by the owner, and a little over 40% was leased to non-Indian cattle operators. There were 14 Indian operators in the community utilizing 385 acres per family. Land losses by sale or lease in the last 5 years have amounted to 280 acres per family, and they have gained

only about 10 acres per family. The trend toward landlessness appears to be taking place more rapidly here than in the two other communities.

These three communities described and classified as traditional, transitional, and transpositional provide a pattern of change in social organization from the kinship system toward the contemporary family system. This bulletin is organized on this conception of change. The traditional kinship organization is described in Section III. In Section IV, the modern family organization is described and compared, and in Section V, the changes are evaluated, and suggestions for future changes are recommended.

# III. Traditional Kinship Organization

The kinship system, which played such an important role in the lives of the Dakota Indians in earlier times, may be viewed from several levels of social organization. Since any social group is made up of individual human beings, one possible viewpoint considers the influence of the kinship system on each person in the group. Secondly, the biological family, consisting of parents and off-spring, is a small group which can be viewed as a part of the total kinship system. A third view of a larger social group is possible by studying the kinship pattern in the band. To the Dakota Indians the real family unit was composed of close relatives held together by a system of extended kinship practices. And finally, the intergroup relationships among bands, subtribes, and tribes within the Dakota nation provide a fourth view of the workings of traditional kinship organization. In this section the material will be presented in the order suggested by these four viewpoints.

**Childhood**—Perhaps the most vital kinship role in early Dakota society was the provision of affection and guidance by parents to their children. The ideal parents loved their children, first of all, but loving parents were secondly concerned with proper home training. They wished to impress their children with the fact that the actions of every person reflected on the kinship group. They attempted to provide adequately for the material needs of their children, since giving food, clothing, and personal ornaments to children was an indication of their care and affection. They tried to treat the child as a person of dignity and pride, avoiding physical punishment which might enslave or subjugate the child's spirit. Ideal parents regarded their children as rational creatures and allowed them to exercise their powers of choice and responsibility. They never roughly or unnecessarily reproved their children, and if admonishment seemed advisable, it

was gentle and reasonable in order not to hurt the child's feelings.

Child training began when the newborn infant was placed on a cradle board and lifted to the mother's back. Since the infant was constantly with its mother as she went about her work, and she was ready to provide for any need of the child, the attachment between mother and infant was very strong and secure. If the mother was tired of toting her infant about, she would hang the board from a tree, bush, or tipi pole, so that the baby could look at the world from an upright position rather than from a distorted angle lying on its back. The baby-board was shaped to support the small form of the infant and encouraged the baby to grow with arrow-like straightness.

When the young boy outgrew the cradle board, he continued to follow his mother about as she carried out her daily tasks. Children were kept interested and occupied by the light work and informal training given them. They were especially encouraged to develop their powers of observation. Education in useful knowledge and training in necessary skills was provided the young children, contributing to their assurance and ability in self-support.

If a youngster were disobedient to his mother, she reminded him of his duty to his family and social group. A reprimand, which shamed the child before the kinship groups, was probably more effective in disciplining the child than any sort of physical punishment would have been since quite early the child was taught to endure physical hardships without whimpering. To the strict disciplinarian of contemporary non-Indian society, Dakota children appeared to be excessively indulged by their parents and relatives. The permissive attitudes of Dakota parents fostered an intolerance of restraint in the children. But as Francis Parkman observed, it would be hard to find parents who were fonder of their children. He described an instance of parental pride in which a father would seat himself upon a buffalo robe, "place his small favorite upright before him and chant in a low tone some of the words used as an accompaniment to the war dance. The little fellow, who could just manage to balance himself by stretching out both arms, would lift his feet and turn slowly round and round in time to his father's music." Parkman commented that this father was delighted with his son's performance and looked around to see if the precocious performance of his off-spring were being admired by his guest.[11]

Love of children was not confined to biological parents in the traditional Dakota kinship system. Close relatives, especially grandparents, aunts, and uncles, often gave as much attention to the infant as the actual mother and father. These secondary parents were likewise responsible for the child's training and discipline, and they accepted the child as their own whenever his

[11]Francis Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*, page 195.

natural parents were gone or lost. Grandmothers were especially likely to assume the mother's role in an emergency. The following account by the missionary, Stephen Riggs, is not unusual:

> Some weeks ago, an elderly woman with a young babe begged me for clothing for the little one. I asked her if it were her child. She replied that it was her grandchild, that its mother died last summer, and that she had nursed it ever since. At first she had no milk, but she continued nursing it, until the milk flowed for the little orphan.[12]

Dakota children received an early informal education in all of the things needed to prepare them for their station in life. In addition to training in skills and crafts, they learned a great deal about the geography, botany, and zoology of the northern plains. The legends and history of the Dakota people were transmitted to the younger generation and principles of correct use of the Dakota languages were likewise emphasized. Proper respect for age and wisdom was not neglected. Children who were educated to exhibit self-control in action and in speech were highly regarded.

The socialization of Dakota children depended in large measure upon their internalization of the principle virtues of Dakota life embodied in the moral code. Gordon McGregor concluded that the moral code contained four essential virtues.

*Honor*—Children were constantly presented with examples of bravery when successful warriors returned from battle and were proclaimed as champions as they circled the camp by the public voice of the village. The names of the victors were called out in honor of their exploits. Younger warriors were incited to emulate feats of bravery, to fight against great odds rather than leave the field without honor, and to gain glory by outwitting the enemy by stealth as well as in open combat. The boys, observing this warlike pageant, early learned the lesson that the highest status was reserved for those who gained martial renown.

*Fortitude*—Closely related to bravery, the second great virtue of Dakota life was the courage to accept continued hardships, to suffer pain, and to endure self-inflicted tortures. This quality was learned by the children at the Sun Dance as they watched respected warriors struggle for hours to release themselves from thongs tied to strips of skin on their chests because they had made a vow to participate in this ceremonial. It did not require unusual powers of observation for the children to infer that those people with the greatest fortitude also exhibited the finest character.

*Generosity* – The willingness to give away all their possessions to their kinsmen was a third basic virtue of Dakota life. The "give-away" ceremony was a dramatic means of honoring others and gaining social prestige. Gifts were always made

[12]Stephen R. Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years With the Sioux*, page 131.

in honor of someone, often a child or a deceased member of the immediate family, as a demonstration of love or grief. The younger members of the group learned that the giver was acclaimed and respected, especially by the recipients of the gifts, according to the degree that he impoverished himself.

*Wisdom*—Moral integrity was the fourth essential virtue of Dakota life. It was an ideal of behavior receiving the greatest emphasis among the older men in the kinship groups. Leaders should always be "wise and composed, and those who spoke well and showed good insight and judgment were elected to the councils. In the family the grandfathers were respected for their wisdom and were expected to pass it on to their grandsons."[13]

The moral code embracing the virtues of Dakota society was presented to youth through example rather than the compulsion of their elders. This was usually the case in training young people in the correct kinship practices, although certain avoidances were verbally expressed and sanctioned by ridiculing gossip. These "taboos" were of a social nature, and did not relate to the body and physical habits. They were first applied to the relationship between brother and sister. After the age of six, boys were told that they should no longer speak or play with their sisters. The girls were advised to stay near their mothers and participate in activities which would prepare them for household duties, while the boys were encouraged to join their older brothers in games of hunting, fighting, and riding. The adults were concerned that the young men learn a maximum of self-confidence and aggressiveness in their pursuit of game and the enemy. The counsel of adults was always given without strong emotion. The boys were trained to control their behavior and to overcome any weakness which would restrict their effectiveness as a hunter and fighter.

The most important training of the girls in Dakota society was designed to prepare them to function effectively as a skilled helper and admiring companion to their warrior husbands. Since the male was imbued with such a sweeping invitation to be master of the female, it was logical that the girl's training should emphasize safeguarding pre-marital chastity. After marriage her glory was a reflection of her husband's deeds. She could only gain attention when he demonstrated his bravery in battle or was successful in the chase. At some ceremonies she could sing of the bravery of her brothers, and at the Sun Dance she could mentally share her brother's tortures.

The kinship practice of extending relationships brought all boys and girls of the younger generation into the primary avoidance pattern. This behavior served as a model for later adult avoidance patterns, and it also introduced the values of helpfulness and generosity to the young people. The young girl who was old enough to avoid her

[13]Gordon McGregor, *Warriors Without Weapons*, pages 106-107.

brother was learning to use her skill in sewing and embroidery in order to make beautiful garments for her future husband and children. Her brother, in turn, learned that the best trophies won or captured should be brought back as a present for his sister.

The role of the young girl in Dakota society emphasized a "self-conscious" attitude of respect for her brother. She learned to accept the fact that boys occupied a superior position in the household; that to trouble or embarrass them would be a serious violation of kinship rules. She was constantly warned that she must develop the habit of doing small tasks for her brother that did not involve talking to him directly, or working at his side.

As the boys approached manhood they began to prepare for a more serious adult role in life. They were expected to "seek a vision" while undergoing an ordeal to prove their fortitude and courage. The youthful Dakota male would present gifts to an older man who would give him guidance during the ordeal. The boy was advised to purify himself in the sweat lodge, and instructed in the proper ceremonials and prayers that were to be presented to the spirits during the vision quest. Going away by himself, the young man fasted, prayed, and punished himself until the expected vision finally appeared. Then

**The older people like to carry on the traditions of their ancestors.**

he returned to camp singing a song of victory. Since he could not understand his vision, he returned to the counselor, who interpreted the dream, told him what powers he had acquired by the visitation, what dances he must perform, and what objects should be placed in his medicine bundle to protect him from harm. Now the young man was ready to engage in his first war party. Again purifying himself in the sweat bath, he invited several young warriors to a feast, and asked that he might be permitted to accompany them in a minor capacity when they next went out to meet the enemy. Now the carefree days of Dakota childhood were over, and the young man was inducted into the hazardous life of the adult warrior.

There were special roles which might be given to some Dakota children because of unusual circumstances. The practice followed by some parents of great liberality in giving away gifts in behalf of their especially loved child increased the respect shown the child by the kinship group, since they expected him to excel in living up to the highest standards of conduct. The extreme expression of such ascribed prestige was in the "child-beloved" who from birth was privileged in all things because of the large amount of property constantly given away in his name. On the occasion when great gifts were to be given, the herald announced the event and the name of the child receiving the honor. The recipients of the gifts, usually older, unfortunate kinsmen, recognized the gifts by singing the praise of the child. They believed that everyone benefited by the beloved child's mere existence, and therefore, he had special claims upon the loyalty and support of his tribesmen.

Another ceremony which established a special role for a child had the meaning "to sing for someone." The name applied to the child with the leading role in the ceremony was *hunka*. Frances Densmore has recorded the purport of the ceremony as described by Looking Elk, a Teton Dakota:

> The great result of this ceremony is that the man who performed it was regarded as a father by the child for whom he performed it. He made a solemn vow taking that child under his protection until one or the other died. He became like a brother to the man whose children he sang over and painted with the *hunka* stripes. In all the great ceremonies of the Sioux there is not one that binds two men together so strongly as this.[14]

Learning the required and accepted modes of behavior of the kinship system was the basic responsibility of children growing up in Dakota culture. In general they were expected to learn the necessary patterns for each relative in their grandparents', parents', and siblings' generations. The system was not as complicated as it might appear because once the children learned to recognize the proper behavior for these three generations,

[14]Frances Densmore, *Teton Sioux Music*, page 70.

the basic patterns could be modified for different relatives in each category. At any rate the correct kinship terminology and behavior were such fundamental elements of the Dakota culture that from their earliest experiences in life children were constantly urged to learn them to the best of their ability.

**Courtship and Marriage** — The young warrior who returned from his first successful war party was ready to embark upon a new adult role in life. In this new role he need no longer be bashful and reticent in the presence of young women. It was with pardonable pride that he groomed himself, put on his finest clothes, and strutted about the village bearing himself with airs of gallantry toward the females. It was thus publicly recognized that he was ready to begin a period of courtship.

The role of the Dakota maiden during courtship was characterized by recognition of virtue and insistence upon irreproachable chastity. Those young women of marriageable age who demonstrated such purity were honored by feasts and ceremonials where their prestige was enhanced by the property given away in their honor. It was incumbent upon the men to expose anyone who falsely claimed these honors. A girl who was honored by the Virgin Fire feast before marriage, might qualify for continued recognition through an honorable marriage. This feast could be given by the woman herself, and this was regarded as all the more honorable, or it might be given by the father of an unmarried girl who had repulsed all suitors and while honoring her, her father was also suggesting that it was time she faced her duty to marry.[15]

The courting process was considered legitimate only if carried on in public, and any hidden meeting of a young man and woman was regarded as unquestionably indecent. However, since the men played the aggressive role in courting as in fighting and hunting, the desirability of virginity in girls at marriage had to be defended and protected by the young lady and her close female relatives who served as her chaperons. If a young girl went away from the camp for any purpose, she must always have a chaperon, or her virtue could no longer be maintained. If the girl went to fetch water with a chaperon, for example, it was still possible for a young warrior to idly station himself in a convenient place in the hope that he might be able to detain the girl of his choice for a little gay chatter or a confidential talk. This simple act was sufficient to warn the maiden that the young man desired to court her. She could ignore his attentions and indicate by her manner that she was not interested in him. In fact this was considered appropriate behavior at first even if the young man were acceptable to her. The persistence of the young man's suit was likely to depend on circumstantial evidence of her interest in him rather

[15] Jeannette Mirshy, "The Dakota" in *Co-operation and Competition Among Primitive Peoples* edited by Margaret Mead, pages 410-411.

than any open avowal of affection.

As the courtship process progressed the resistance of the female was subjected to the test of male persistence. If the young girl were a highly virtuous and a desirable marriage partner, several young braves might sit outside her tipi for many hours in the evening in the hope that she would come out to talk to them. Instead they might only receive courtesy food from the girl's mother, and never have an opportunity to plead their cause with the lady of their choice. It was possible that she required further evidence of their achievements and bravery. The warriors might advance their suit by again going on the warpath, bringing home horses and war honors, and thus enhancing their prestige in the whole camp.

The later phases of the courtship are well described in the following account of a young man who has returned with honor from the warpath:

> Heavy with his new importance, Kills Many Enemies proudly accepted the admiration of the people. And when the maiden Red Elk passed by, as she did very often now, her face newly painted and her freshly braided hair shining with bear's oil, he gazed through her as if she mattered not in the least to him. But he was young and full of life, and Red Elk was beautiful. So, when she had been sufficiently humbled by his indifference, he began to visit the girl's home—with the excuse of talking to her brother. On these visits Red Elk spoke no word but bustled about, working every minute of his stay so that he might see how capable she was and how good it would for him if they should share a tipi. At an hour when it was likely she would be at the river drawing water, he would stroll past as if by accident, and after a time the evening came when, wrapped in his courting blanket, he met her and pulled it close about them both. Then it was he told her that he would give her brother two horses, that he could provide plenty of buffalo tongues for her, and that she was a good woman who would work well and bear sturdy sons. And it was agreed that after he had fulfilled his vow and given the Sun Dance she would come to him.[16]

There were undoubtedly many variations in the course of the successful courtship, and, of course, there was always the possibility of a violation of the rules or an accident or loss which might completely disrupt the usual series of events. An example of such an unforseen event is found in a story frequently told among the Teton Dakotas. One version of this story is as follows:

> A young woman had promised to marry a man, but he wished to "make a name for himself" before marriage took place. He had been on the warpath, but he wished to go again that he might distinguish himself by valor. When the war party returned they said he had been killed by the Crows. Sometime afterward in the course of tribal wanderings a camp was made at the place where, according to the report of the war party, the young

[16] Edwin R. Embree, *Indians of the Americas: Historical Pageant*, page 148.

> man had been killed. Dressing herself in her best attire, the maiden went to the edge of the cliff, and after singing . . . (a) song and giving the shrill "woman's tremolo," jumped into the river below.[17]

Assuming that the courtship of the young warrior were successful, and the couple became engaged, it was then necessary to make plans for the wedding with the approval and consultation of the kinship groups involved. The young man called his relatives together for a feast and announced his intentions to be married. If they approved his selection, they brought the best presents they had to him, and these gifts were placed before the lodge of his future bride. The relatives of the girl were then called to the lodge where food was spread before them, and they learned the particulars of the proposed marriage. They discussed the character and qualification of the expectant husband, and reached an agreement for or against the marriage. If the decision were favorable, then by sending gifts and visiting the tipi of the man's family they indicated their willingness to proceed with the marriage ceremony. Disapproval of the engagement was indicated by the girl's relatives if they rejected or returned the gifts placed before her lodge. In this case the unhappiness of the young man might cause him to wantonly destroy the gifts in order to indicate his mortification.

The actual marriage might be consummated in several ways. In some instances a special ceremonial publicly recognizing the nuptials was held. In others the ceremonies were limited to the kinship groups of the bride and bridegroom. Again the bride was purchased. The act of accepting the payment of a specified number of horses made the taking of the girl to her new home a recognized marriage. The married couple might sit side by side in the shade of a buffalo robe for half a day, in order that everyone in camp could observe that the marriage was official.

Elopement was an alternative for those young people who could not obtain the consent of their relatives. Through the help of a friend the man might entice the girl away from the camp in order to run off with her, or he could resort to the magic of the lover's flute to lure his idol to steal away with him for a clandestine meeting. Although these elopements were frowned upon and occasionally annulled, usually the kinship groups recognized the married status of the young people.

Wife stealing was not unknown among the Dakota Indians, but the culprit had to compensate the injured husband with adequate gifts in order to avoid the vengeance of the rightful spouse. An offended husband who tried to coerce his wife to return to him against her will was disgraced before his people and might even be driven from the camp. If the wife of a highly respected man were stolen, however, he was acclaimed by the whole community if he disposed of her by

[17]Densmore, *op. cit.*, page 494.

running her out of the camp. An excellent description of the attitudes and feelings of the Dakotas concerning the theft of a wife from her husband by the great Chief Crazy Horse is presented in his biography written by Mari Sandoz.[18]

Newly married couples preferred at first to live with the husband's parents. However, since the avoidance taboo between the wife and his father was very strict, it was soon more convenient for the newlyweds to set up housekeeping in their own tipi near the husband's parents in the camp circle. In rare cases the couple might live with the wife's parents, but again the avoidance necessary between the husband and his mother-in-law made this arrangement even less satisfactory. Living with parents had the additional disadvantage of prohibiting the wife from demonstrating her home-making talents upon which her ultimate prestige was based.

**The Kinship Group**—Cooperative living requires an elaborate system of rules and regulations governing the social behavior in order to keep friction and strife at a minimum. The Dakota Indians found their solution to the problem of communal living in a complicated kinship system. The kinship group or *tiyospaye*, as it was called in the Dakota language, has been appropriately characterized as "a scheme of life that worked." It worked because it was an all-inclusive system providing rewards and obligations for every member of the group. Observance of kinship rules and being a good relative to other group members was the ultimate goal of Dakota life. The kinship system provided a much needed, but pleasant discipline for group living. There were occasional violations of the rules, but the sanctions supporting the kinship demands were strong enough to keep serious violations minimal and offenders were considered socially irresponsible.[19]

The Dakota culture was intimately bound together with the kinship system in a close-knit cooperative society. In this society the *tiyospaye* was an intermediate unit between the individual and the larger units of social organization. Kinship group membership was ascribed on the basis of biological relationships established through ancestry. Membership implied that the individual would abide by established practices and maintain a specific attitude toward other members of his group. The group was expected to provide its members with a primary focus for their interests and loyalties. It was the duty of the members to cooperate with and assist each other and to place group interests above their own. They were closely and continuously in friendly interaction. Just as members of a family were bound together by ties of affection as well as common interest, quarrels between kinship group members were considered more reprehensible

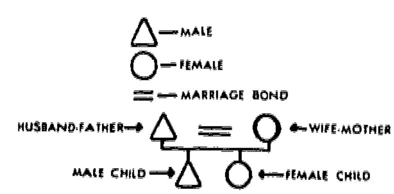
[18]Mari Sandoz, *Crazy Horse*, pages 240-249.

[19]Ella Deloria, *Speaking of Indians*, pages 24-74.

than quarrels between members and outsiders.[20]

The *tiyospaye* was essential to the continuation of tribal life in Dakota culture. It was symbolized in the camp circle where each nuclear family unit had its established place side by side with their close relatives. The kinship group formed a complete circle which simply expanded to fit a new family in its proper place or contracted when a family visited relatives or sojourned for some time in another Dakota camp circle.

The pattern of kinship in Teton Dakota society can be described as an extended family emphasizing generation, sex, and relationship as the determining factors in the respect and familiarity shown by one member of the system to another. The smallest unit in the kinship group was the nuclear family rarely including more than a married couple and their off-spring. This basic unit can be diagrammed as follows:




In the nuclear family monogamous marriage was highly virtuous, although polygyny was occasionally practiced by men who were able to support more than one wife. If a second wife were taken, she was often a sister of the first. Or if a man's brother were killed, he felt an obligation to marry his widowed sister-in-law. He was obligated to marry the wife of his deceased *kola*, or brother of ceremonial adoption.

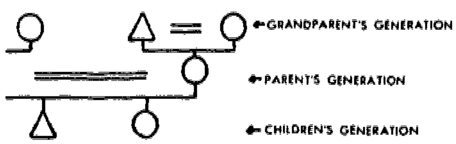
It was a commonly accepted pratice that a man should not marry anyone in his own kinship group. Exogamous marriage was required to the extent that no man could marry a woman having a common grandparent. However, the marriage relationship in the nuclear family was of secondary importance to the consanguine or kinship group attachment which could not be dissolved by divorce. Irrespective of where a man lived, he continued throughout life a primary relationship with parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, brothers, sisters, and cousins composing his kinship group, and his wife in the same way was devoted to her close relatives. If the nuclear family were broken by divorce, the wife returned to her kinship group and the husband to his. Children of the divorced couple could usually decide where they wished to live, but it was more common for girls to go with their mothers and boys with their fathers. Custody of the children might be resolved by the fact that the role of grandparents in rearing children permitted them to assume great responsibility for their support, and the children stayed with grandparents who had previously cared for them.

Residence customarily determined the specific kinship group claimed by a new child, but it was possible, because of the vague residence requirements, for boys in the

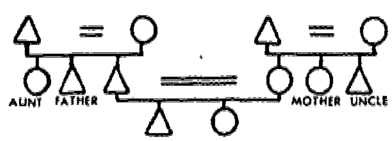
[20]Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, page 152.

family to claim their father's and girls their mother's kinship groups. This determination was involved in the correct designation of relatives in the extended family, and influenced the term of address and conventional behavior since it made a difference whether a youth called a man father or uncle.

Perhaps the system can best be viewed diagrammatically. The nuclear family previously symbolized may add the grandparents' generation in lineal descent as is shown in the following diagram:

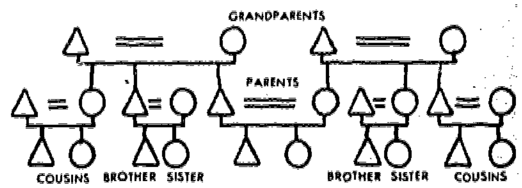



Then if we expand the parents' generation collaterally the diagram becomes more complicated:

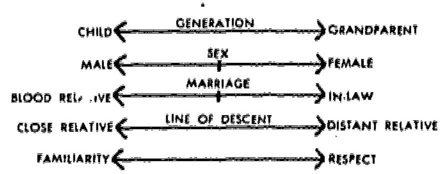



In addition to their own parents the children considered their father's brother and mother's sister as father and mother. Their father's sister and mother's brother are aunt and uncle. These kinship categories were likewise extended to all other relatives in the kinship group, so that all male members of the parent's generation were either called father or uncle, and female members were called mother or aunt.

In his own generation each individual extended his relations so that all male members were brothers or cousins and female members sisters or cousins. The above diagram can be expanded to demonstrate this:




The same classification is made for affinal as for consanguine relatives with the addition of the in-law terminology. The four important factors in the kinship system determining degrees of familiarity and respect were generation, sex, marriage, and line of descent. This might be symbolized:




Brothers of lineal descent, for example, would practice great familiarity since they are of the same generation, sex, and family. At the other extreme, greatest respect would be given by a man to a female in-law of the grandparents' generation who was not in the direct line of descent.[21]

Varying degrees of familiarity and respect among relatives became so well established in the Dakota kinship system that they can be classified. The four principle patterns were: (1) friendly and in-

[21]Royal B. Hassrik, "Teton Dakota Kinship System," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 46, 1944, pages 344-5.

timate; (2) tenderness and affection; (3) reserve and respect; and (4) avoidance. Each of these modes of treatment involved specific attitudes and correct conventional behavior which should be described in greater detail.

*Friendly and Intimate*—A man in Dakota society was expected to maintain in association with his sister-in-law an attitude of easy-going friendship that usually involved teasing and joking. Brothers and cousins were often times leagued together in the almost universal joking carried on with one another's wives and sisters-in-law. In much the same way this friendly and intimate relationship was established between a woman and her brothers-in-law. In case of the death of a spouse of a sister-in-law or brother-in-law they became possible marriage partners of those who are in this friendly and intimate relationship with them. This pattern was even more intensified between husband and wife because of the deeper emotional bond related to consummation of sexual life. The role of the husband as head of the family perhaps mitigated the reciprocal joking with his wife to some degree, and some cases were complicated by polygamy. Thus to make the generalization that all married couples engaged equally in this pattern of friendly joking is probably unwarranted. Although men usually regarded their wives with stoical indifference in public, they were likely to indicate affection for them in subtle ways, so that the relationship between spouses might exhibit elements of friendly intimacy and tender affection. The wife indicated her affection for her husband by making a good home for him, waiting on him, and doing the work around the camp in appreciation for his efforts in providing subsistence and protection for her.

*Tenderness and Affection*—The greatest love and devotion was shown in the attitude of brother to brother and sister to sister, and somewhat less intensely the same attitudes prevailed among cousins of the same sex. It was not uncommon for a man who had lost his brothers or cousins in warfare to say "I am related to nobody," even though he still had many fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, and even sons and daughters. This attitude resulted from the fact that more dependence in times of difficulty could be placed upon a brother than upon any other relative.

Sisters practiced the same frank and loyal devotion toward each other. They must always present a united front to outsiders, permitting no criticism and speaking loudly in their praise of each other. This sister group combined to counteract the males who were leagued together against them in the joking relationship. Since a woman might be given to her brother-in-law in marriage, she had to be so devoted to her sister that they could live together in harmony under all circumstances.

The attitude of an individual toward his parents was one of tenderness and affection shading into

reserve and respect. Love and respect for parents was required, and the parents returned love and cherished their children. The grandchild had a similar relationship with his grandparents involving even greater gentleness, frankness, and respect. The aged grandparents often played an important role in child-rearing, exercising a kindly and indulgent dominance over their grandchildren that outweighed parental influence.

Married couples could show their affection for their parents by taking the responsibility for their care in their later years. Although there were always some problems of avoidance, the aged parents were usually taken into their children's households. If the avoidance taboo could not be ignored, a grandmother might establish a home near the tipi of her daughter where she could be assisted with food and care and at the same time enjoy her daughter's company and help with the children.

*Reserve and Respect*—The accepted mode of behavior toward aunts and uncles, and nephews and nieces was dominated by an attitude of constraint and deference. The degree of reserve depended in large measure upon the distance of the relatives and the sex. A nephew would exhibit greater reserve in the presence of an aunt who was distantly related than to an uncle who was a brother of his mother.

Partial avoidance of relatives was usually related to the attitudes of reserve and respect. It was required of a man for his sisters, female cousins, and father-in-law. The same was true for a woman in regard to her brothers, male cousins, and mother-in-law. The pattern of separate activities for brothers and sisters when they were children, previously mentioned, was carried over into adult life. A woman showed respect for her brother by applauding his bravery and making gifts to please him, but she would never talk directly to him or sit near him.

An excellent illustration of the respect and avoidance relationship is contained in this description of the association of a bride with her mother-in-law.

> The parents-in-law like to receive food at the hands of their daughter-in-law and brag endlessly about it; in the same spirit they will "show off" the moccasins or dress made by her for them. This admiring, helpful attitude must be adhered to even if the women are not well suited to each other. For such women to quarrel or fight, to merit the label "She who fights with her mother-in-law" is a complete admission of loss of self-respect, of prestige. And conversely, should such women during the passage of years grow close together, they may not show this warm personal feeling by lapsing into an easy informality. A woman may not discuss with her mother-in-law anything that pertains to sex, she may not express her ideas, her philosophy of life—that is reserved for sisters and cousins. Across the affinal line no personal note may pass.[22]

This same attitude of respectful cooperation was apparent between

[22] Minsky, *op. it.*, pages 401-402.

the husband and his father-in-law, although in time the avoidance practice was modified toward greater opportunity for reserved association.

*Complete Avoidance*—The idealistic expression of respect and love was found in the complete avoidance between a man and his mother-in-law, and a woman and her father-in-law. It was in these associations that avoidance reached its highest point. They were forbidden to talk directly to one another, to stay in the same tipi, even to look directly at each other. A woman would not listen to any gossip which might in the slightest way detract from the extreme respect she had for her father-in-law. She might cook or make gifts for him, but using a child as an intermediary would say, "Give this food (or gift) to your grandfather."

The father-in-law always defended his son's wife in quarrels with members of his family, even if she were wrong. He gave gifts to her through the son, saying, "My daughter-in-law may like this." If his son's wife died, he would mourn for her, but would not look directly at the corpse. Rather he would look off in the distance as he spoke of his respect for his daughter-in-law who had fed and clothed and cared for him. It was a boast among many old men that they could not tell what their daughters-in-law looked like, since they had never looked directly at them.

Intensification of the respect relationship was greater as a result of marriage than as a result of sex differences or more distant generations. It was this fact that gave a kinship group a sense of unity with others related through marriage. Greater respect was expected from children for their grandparents than their parents, and for a grandparent of the opposite rather than their own sex, but if the person were an in-law of the older generation he received the greatest possible respect.

It is evident that there were many variations in these four primary types of association. The degrees of affection, respect, and avoidance were slightly different for each kind of relationship. If two senior relatives had the same relationship to a child, he reacted toward them as they acted to each other, but with greater respect in deference to their generation. When there were no generational differences, sex difference increased respect. Thus a man openly expressed the greatest affection for his brothers, and while the affection for his sisters was great, it was expressed with reserve and respect.

Success in all affairs of the *tiyospaye* was thought to depend upon the attitude of cooperation that was embodied in the kinship patterns. To the Dakota Indians it appeared that those bands which complied with the regulations were most fortunate in cooperative living. The individual was honored for the prestige that he gave to his kinship group, and one way he could gain respect from other bands was by proper kinship behavior. Nonconformity was subject to severe criti-

cism, ridicule, and gossip, and might eventually cause the shamed person to be driven from the camp. The most severe punishment a man could receive was exile from the vital kinship group without which his existence was perilous.

The most sought after role for the young man in Dakota society was characterized by willingness to risk everything for the welfare and honor of the kinship group. A system of decorations was used to symbolize special exploits in defense of the group. In battle, for example, if a warrior received a severe wound without showing pain, he was exhibiting the kind of brave spirit that would make it possible for him to meet death fighting for his people and thus gain the highest glory.

As a man grew older, and his ability to do battle with the enemy declined, the most honored role which he could attain was a leader in the council. Just as he won decorations as a defender of his people in youth, as an elder statesman he could achieve respect and honor by wisely advising the kinship group in their hunting and fighting activities.

The most honored role available to other band members was based on their concept of generosity. Women who brought food to the council tipi or gave gifts to the returning warrior were fulfilling this highly recognized role. Providing food for older people who might be needy and helpless was also valued. Children were taught to share in this generosity by being instructed to take gifts to indigent persons. It was considered a courteous act for a child to bring an older person home where he would receive food prepared by the child's mother. Giving generously of one's most cherished possessions while singing songs of praise and joy made the giver brave and strong in the hearts of other members of the group.

In addition to these honored roles there were a number of special roles that might be practiced in Dakota society. A typical special role was that of adoption. Small children of an enemy tribe whose parents had been killed in battle might be adopted by a Dakota woman who had lost a child in infancy. An adopted child assumed full rights and responsibilities and was raised in exactly the same manner as the mother treated any of her other children. Even more exceptional was the adoption of a murderer to take the place of the person he killed. The relatives of the murdered man might agree to win the culprit's loyalty through kinship rather than to punish him. This was actually done by adopting him in the place of his victim.

There were several other typical examples of special roles that should be mentioned. One was the man who played the part of a woman because he was unable or disinclined to engage in the strenuous life of the warrior. He took the dress of women, and did women's work such as sewing and embroidering in which he might develop great skill. He was thought to have received this role in his vision quest, and thus was not a subject of ridi-

cule or disdain. Another was the role of the fop "whose sole purpose was to win women counts rather than war counts." He was thought to have had an "elk vision" and thus acquired great power over women through the use of his "elk love medicine." He was likely to spend much time in brushing his hair, grooming himself, and elaborately dressing, decorating, and perfuming himself in order to improve his chances in his game of conquering women. A third role was the clown who had a "frog or night hawk vision" and therefore the recipient acted like a fool the rest of his life for the amusement of the band.[23]

As long as members of Dakota society knew and played their roles well, this was truly "a scheme of life that worked." Harmonious life was possible because the rights of others were shown a nice regard in the kinship system. It was enhanced by the spirit of generosity which made it possible for everyone to find comradeship and sustenance from birth to death without depending on false charity. The feeling of security and attachment engendered in the kinship group was well expressed in the Dakota proverb, "A man with many children has many homes."[24]

*Larger Units of Social Organization*—The kinship group was united by the ties of friendship, affection, respect, and loyalty previously described and was the basic unit of social organization among the Dakota Indians. Members of a kinship group camped, lived, and worked together throughout the year, and were often referred to as a band or camp circle. The group might at certain times camp with other bands, especially those with which they had friendly and cooperative interband relations because of strong ties of intermarriage. Since a man must marry outside his own group, his children always had loved and respected relatives in at least two bands.

The bands, which usually hunted independently during much of the year, came together in the spring with other related bands and formed a tribe, putting up their lodges at a central location, each band occupying its appointed place in the great camp circle. From each of the bands leaders were selected to participate in the tribal counsel which took charge of the camp. The chiefs selected for the counsel were honored for their war record and their generosity, and were also likely to be the patrilineal heads of his kinship groups.

The band was also the typical fighting unit among the Dakota Indians, unless the prestige of a war leader made it possible for two or three bands to unite in a grand war party. Each leader acted independently and in the manner of an autonomous ruler. Only on rare occasions was it possible for a whole tribe to be engaged in warfare at the same time and place.

Several tribes were likely to feel a bond of friendship based on the same language, usages, and super-

[23]Embree, *op. cit.*, pages 138-140.

[24]Luther Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, page 163.

stitions. They had no central government and were never really united even in wars. These were the major divisions of the great Dakota nation which ranged over a vast territory on the northern plains from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. The Dakota nation was a vague designation for many different people with a language and culture which had some similarities.

## IV. Contemporary Family Organization

There have been great changes in the family of the Dakota Indians since the days when they moved freely on the plains in their search for the buffalo herds. Some of these changes can be revealed by comparing the traditional kinship organization described in the previous section with the contemporary Pine Ridge family which will be described here. This description will follow the same pattern outlined at the beginning of Part III. First, the development of the individual from dependent infant to socialized adult roles will be presented. Then the small family group, or nuclear family, will be analyzed. The third section will be devoted to discussion of the remnants of kinship which are observable in modern Pine Ridge communities.

**The Individual**—The new born child in the Pine Ridge family has continued to receive attention and security from his parents. Family members and relatives are happy to provide for the infant's basic needs, and the little one is soon comfortable in the close-knit family circle. As the youngster grows he learns that those people around him will not reject him or deny his reasonable demands. He discovers that relatives, particularly grandparents, are delighted by his visits, and that they willingly and indulgently care for him when his parents are away working or visiting.

The pre-school child is regarded as an individual whose dignity must not be suppressed by physical punishment. Therefore, violations which merit attention are subject to reprimands, and if coaxing is ineffective, ridicule and shaming will usually discourage unappreciated behavior. Punishments are usually moderated by praise for proper behavior, thus providing the child with pride in his efforts to please others.

If there is any great difference in the childhood training of boys and girls, it is apparent in the tendency of boys to learn more aggressive ways than girls. Male aggressiveness must not, however, be based on hositility which might cause embarrassment or discomfort to others. Instead, the young boy must learn socialized patterns of asserting his own ideas in thinking and acting. This character trait has a much weaker development in the female child, and hostile aggression expressed by the girl causes her great shame in the eyes of her social

group. Her stronger attachment to home and family offers her protection from the hostility of others and encourages her to learn domestic skills at an early age.

In early childhood, socialization results from association and training provided by older generations of family and relatives who tend to either look back to the past glory of the Dakota nation or passively accept their reservation conditions with more or less apathy. In keeping with this socialization the child discovers that the educational system on the reservation, dominated by non-Indian values of change and progress, offers little more than superficial pride in temporary accomplishments. It lacks meaning because it has no place in the children's early impressions or in their play activities. The opportunity for vocational training has litttle appeal to children who have probably never heard it extolled as a virtue in their home.

The increased knowledge and contacts that the children have from attending school make them more aware of differences between reservation and non-reservation residents. They are likely to hear their parents comment on these differences, and they may be vaguely aware of the fact that discrimination is practiced in some places against them. The security of family and community is even more essential to the Pine Ridge children when the world beyond the reservation seems hostile toward them. Insecurity in an unknown environment may be transmitted to children by unconscious acts on the part of their parents, as, for example, when a mother hides her child behind her skirts when in the presence of non-Indians.

There is likewise much evidence that in school the children appear to be model pupils, and yet have not accepted the supervision of the teacher. The basic insecurity of Pine Ridge children makes it possible for them to passively submit to or defy authority in the classroom without creating any problem with a "bad conscience." Rather than causing self-blame, the problem is solved by retreating into themselves. If they should decide to escape from the situation by running away, they are likely to be received by sympathetic relatives. Parents react indifferently and unemotionally to any inquiry in regard to the truant. They have been known to answer, when asked why their child left school, "We didn't ask him."[25]

The most serious barriers to school adjustment among the children are the "exclusive use of the English language, rigid time schedule, limitations on freedom to express feelings as they do at home, keen interpersonal competition in their school work, and a non-Indian or highly acculturated Indian school teacher with 'white' ideas—all of these are foreign to their extremely permissive and cooperative family way of life."[26] Commonly, their response to these frustrations is withdrawal or escape, and they refuse to

[25]Erik H. Erikson, "Observations on Sioux Education," *The Journal of Psychology*, VII (January, 1939), page 125.
[26]Cardwell, *op. cit.*, pages 50-51.

recite if there is any chance that they might be shamed for their efforts.

Policies regarding Indian education contribute to the lack of security felt by the children. In the past the educational system was predicated on the belief that the best results could be achieved by removing the child from his home and weakening the family ties. The following analysis of a survey by the Merriam Committee describes the situation in boarding schools where children were separated for considerable periods from their parents:

> . . . the school day in most such boarding schools was theoretically devoted half to academic studies and half to manual training. However, in many instances, the "manual training" was found to be actually composed of institutional labor. By utilizing small children to do the more or less heavy work of gardening, kitchen work, janitorial labor, etc., and by paying extremely low salaries to the school staff, it was possible to operate such institutions on a very low budget. They described teaching methods as antiquated, mechanistic and of a type which had been generally discarded years before in public school systems. It was their contention that, although the boarding schools might impart some modicum of knowledge in terms of the three R's, they failed to educate in the broader sense of preparing the Indian child for his place in the society in which he would be expected to live.

The Merriam Committee concluded: ". . . . that the boarding schools as they found them denied the established role of the family in the development of personality, and ignored the necessity on the part of the child for parental guidance and affection. They found the general policy and objectives of Indian education to be those of attempted 'de-indianization' through severance from family and reservation environment." They recommended "that children be educated in day schools located within the communities in which they lived in order that they might benefit from a more normal home life, and in order that the schools could thus reach beyond the child to influence the life and thinking of the total community."[27]

Conditions in the boarding schools have changed considerably, and in recent years government and parochial high schools have made it possible for young people to advance their education. Additional education does not, however, make students completely independent of their families and relatives. In their own neighborhood their rights are better protected and their responsibilities better defined, so that the high school may still be considered a hostile and unfriendly environment. Perhaps the most notable change has been the decline in restrictions imposed on sociability between teenage girls and boys. The old customs no longer restrict association, and the young people tend to model their social activities after the easy informality of western society.

[27]Felix S. Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law*, pages 10 and 11.

The high value placed on education by non-Indians and their willingness to make sacrifices to obtain it often appear confusing to young people on the Pine Ridge Reservation. They are aware that the educated man is supposed to prosper and enjoy life more fully, but when they successfully complete their education few opportunities are available on the reservation, and the educated person does not enjoy any more luxury than the uneducated under these circumstances. If a young man returns to the reservation after completing high school or even college, he might hope to be of some service to his people, and, incidentally, hope to improve his own economic position. The poverty of his relatives and friends often becomes a burden that despite his best efforts he is unable to carry. Soon he is forced to give up his efforts, accept his fate, and live in the same hand-to-mouth pattern of property sharing and cooperative living which he hoped to change.

In the reservation community the educated youth encounters the customary adult attitudes of apathy and bitterness about wrongs suffered in the past. He finds that he must share with family and friends in order to gain acceptance in the groups from which he can hope to derive any feeling of security. He discovers the high degree of respect for the dignity of individuals has been maintained, but that it is moderated by aggressive tendencies toward those, who for purposes of political or economic advancement, attempt to push above the group level. If he wants to raise his standard of living, he is discouraged by the critical gossiping of the community.

The role of the adult female in the Pine Ridge community has changed since the days when she devoted her best efforts to supporting and aiding her husband. The retention of kinship elements has maintained an important role for the mother in the functioning of the household. She has retained a number of essential jobs such as child rearing, household management, and food preparation and preservation. Much of the work involved in caring for the garden or farm, taking care of poultry or small livestock, and maintaining the homestead has been added to her assigned chores. Even more important in supplementing the female role in recent years has been the wife's contribution to family unity. In many cases her husband has to depend upon seasonal work away from home and is unable to provide adequate economic support. The wife then becomes the family center during his absences. She has to devote her efforts to providing food for the children and wisely utilizing the meager resources at her disposal. In case of a family crises, such as illness, she has to be a stabilizing influence and reach vital decisions. If she fulfills the roles of loving advisor and generous provider, in the eyes of her children,, the whole world revolves about her.

The traditional roles of the adult male in Dakota society disappeared with the demise of the buffalo herds

and the end of the Indian wars. The position of the husband has continued to deteriorate on the reservation, gradually being worn away by attrition. He is still recognized as head of the family and their primary sources of financial support. Because of sporadic employment the family must often resort to surplus commodities and welfare payments to tide them over during times when work is not available. The efforts of the government to make the men over into farmers have not been successful. While the cattle industry has an attraction to many Indian males, because it involves working with horses, inadequate resources restrict effort and achievement in the ranching business.

The Pine Ridge men accept their declining role as further evidence of governmental mistreatment and believe that the government should therefore support them, or they may look at their economic situation as a bottomless pit and dispare of their own efforts to change it. The skills which might have provided them with steady employment are lacking, and this has contributed to their apathetic adjustment. Furthermore, they have no meaningfull skills to teach their sons, and a youth is likely to lose respect for his father who is haunted by a feeling of economic inadequacy. In any case the father is usually resigned to his lot and the future does not seem bright.

Special mention should also be given to the roles of grandparents in the Pine Ridge communities, since they are the repositories of tradition, and thus occupy a unique relationship with other family members. They encourage continuation of their traditional roles as advisors to the younger people, as encouragers of the kinship regulations, as second parents to their grandchildren, and as contributors to the financial support of relatives. They are likely to make great sacrifices in order to help young adults who turn to them in time of need. They usually insist upon acting in strict accordance with traditionally accepted kinship relationships. Grandmothers often assume care of their grandchildren and accede to their every demand. Grandfathers feel that they should offer counsel and support to relatives who come to them and ask for help. Failure to fulfill these obligations will cause them to lose status in the community.

The degree of acceptance of and participation in the culture of the reservation community exerts an important influence on the role of the individual. In some cases a man may live in the community and possess little knowledge of the traditional Dakota culture. In a cultural sense he may hardly be reckoned an Indian at all, and his behavior much more nearly resembles that of non-Indians living on or near the reservation. He is likely to be isolated from the majority of community activities, and he may have associations outside the community which encouraged this non-participation. These individuals can best be classified as acculturated, because of their high degree of accept-

ance of the cultural values of the dominant non-Indian society.

The acculturated reservation residents accept the changes taking place in the Indian culture as inevitable, but deplore the resulting personal disorganization. They are anxious to attain the level of material wealth enjoyed by the successful farmer or rancher, and are willing to use disreputable means of satisfying their economic desires. The acculturated individuals tend to disclaim knowledge of their people's ancient customs and may even develop a self-conscious dislike for anything that identifies them with Indian ways. However, irregardless of their rejection of Indian heritage, they are influenced to some extent by the ideals of the community.

The unacculturated people have a different set of attitudes which cause them to play another role in the Pine Ridge community. They take pride in the old customs, continue to use the Siouan language, and oppose changes which contribute to the disappearance of Dakota culture. The weakening of the kinship patterns and the values of cooperative living cause these individuals to feel discouraged about the future. They look back to the days of their people's greatness and military strength, and deplore the injustices, the treaty violations, and the destruction of the Dakota culture. They attribute their present condition to mistreatment by the agents of the government. They are determined to resist the White man's ways, while sublimating the desire to eliminate those unknown forces which are at work to destroy them.

**The Nuclear Family**—The importance of the band or extended family in times past was based on established patterns of cooperative living. The *tiyospaye* was designed to set standards, provide for daily needs, cope with the problems of living, and stimulate cooperation. It was more difficult for the band to serve these essential functions when the allotment system placed individual families on their own piece of land. The task was made doubly difficult by the government's insistence upon dealing with nuclear family heads. There was little opportunity for successful cooperative economic enterprises in the system of competitive capitalism that dominated the thinking of the western agriculturalist. These facts have caused severe damage to the concept of cooperative band living.

There are strong indications that the *tiyospaye* will eventually disappear from the Pine Ridge reservation. This is evident in the shift from a lineal family based on ancestry to a family system which emphasizes the marriage bond as the essential element. It is also shown by the fact that band remnants do not include some community families, and that bands are reduced in number of members. There is a loosening of the bonds which held the relatives together in the *tiyospaye*. Some people want to discard kinship terminology or never knew it. Finally, the influence of the non-Indian family pattern is coercive

and destructive of the traditional kinship system.

The greatest changes have occurred in the customs which were completely out of harmony with the family system of the frontiersman. A plurality of wives, for example, was repugnant to the missionaries and representatives of the government who first came in contact with the Dakota Indians. Persuasion and force were used to wipe out the practice of marrying more than one woman. The response of one of the older patriarchs, when told by an agent that he must choose one wife, was revealing:

> "What!" he exclaimed, "these two women are sisters, both of whom have been my wives for over half a century. I know the way of the white man; he takes women unknown to each other and to his law. These two have been faithful to me and I have been faithful to them. Their children are my children and their grandchildren are mine. We are now living together as brother and sisters. All the people know that we have been happy together, and nothing but death can separate us."[28]

The older people eventually did die and the younger generation was prevented from continuing the practices that conflicted greatly with the non-Indian marriage customs. In the early reservation period the government agents established regulations that forbade continuation of the customs which they could not tolerate. They also insisted that family names be established and recorded so that the government could deal directly with heads of families. This was not an easy task when ancestry was confused by a special kinship terminology and by questionable marriages and orphaned children. The two ideas, the nuclear family and the kinship group, were in conflict on points of how relationship was determined. The main point of contention, of course, was the extending of relationships in the kinship group.

As the transition from kinship system to nuclear family takes place the reduction of control by traditional kinship means provides sufficient opportunity for deviations to occur from both ideals. This is evidenced in the fact that families are frequently broken by divorce and separation. Elopements and illegitimacy cannot be controlled by the family which can no longer depend on former sanctions. At the same time elements of the old system are maintained by many of the older people. Grandparents are customarily quite willing to take care of the illegitimate child through the adoption mechanism, for example. Likewise this adoption rule may be restored if the children are rejected by divorced or separated parents.

The conditions of community living on the Pine Ridge Reservation have caused the nuclear family to exhibit certain distinctive characteristics which can best be described by presenting data gathered in the three communities in which field work was carried out. This

[28] Charles A. Eastman, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, pages 184-185.

description will also provide an additional basis for comparing the degree of acculturation in the three communities.

*Traditional Community* — Some statistical measurements of family characteristics are presented in tables 4 and 5. The traditional community had the smallest average size of family and number of children per family. These results appear contrary to the anticipated conditions in a traditional community. Some reasons for this reversal of the expected pattern may be: (1) the ancient customs of the Dakota family encouraged a low birth rate; (2) the limited availability of medical attention, knowledge of sanitation, and nutrition contributed to high infant mortality; and (3) the complete family was not measured. Since the adults were slightly older, it may be that more grown children had left to establish homes of their own. It was, in fact, here that the greatest number of widowed men and women were found, and a number of them had children who had grown to adulthood, married, and were still living in the community.

One-fourth of the families were single males and females, and the husband-wife type was another sizable group made up largely of older couples whose children had grown up and were on their own. About 40% of the families consisted of husband-wife and one or more children. The irregular families included two families in which a divorced person had remarried and there were step-children as well as natural children in the family group, two in which children had been adopted, and one composed of three generations. The nuclear families are diagrammed in figure 2.

There was some evidence that the traditional community has most nearly retained elements of the Dakota kinship pattern. The larger number of elderly people suggested this conclusion. It was likewise indicated by less family disruption than was typical of the transitional or transpositional communities. It was apparent that in the few cases of remarriage only the younger members of the community were involved. The older values of kinship unity seemed to be continued in sufficiently vital form to prevent a large number of broken homes.

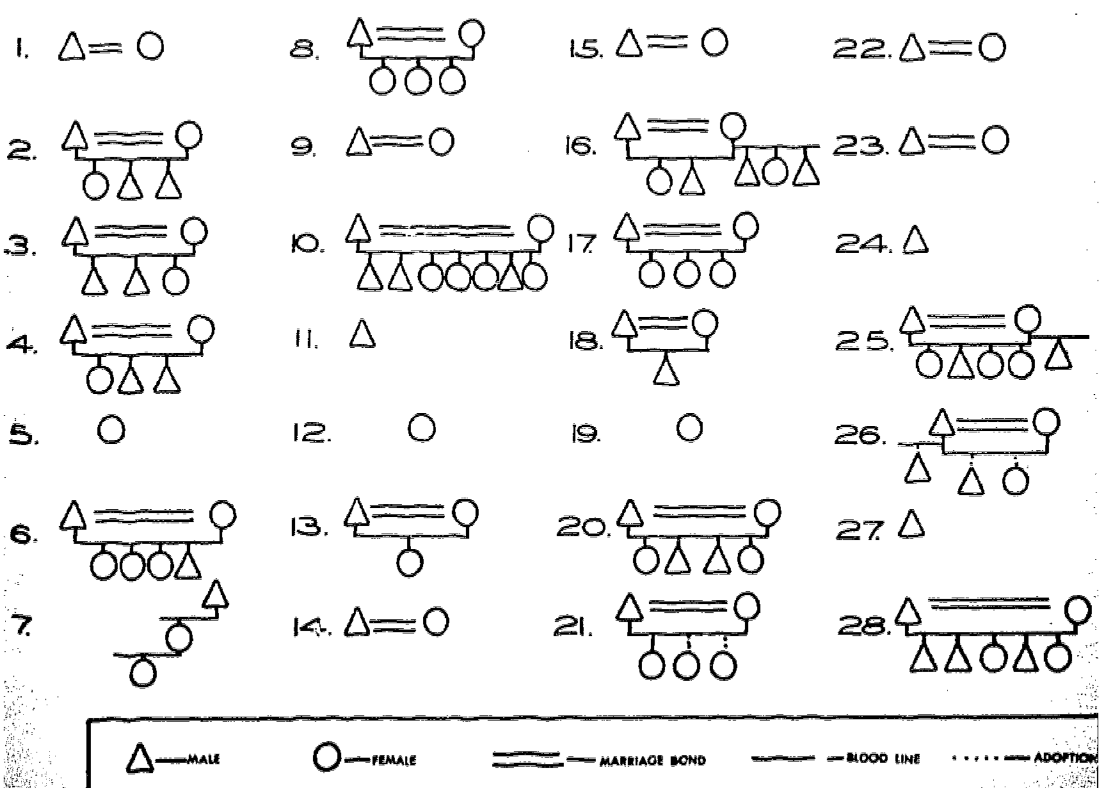
*Transitional Community* — Intermediate family size was evident in the transitional community and the average number of children per family reflected this position as well. The adults were slightly younger than in the traditional community, and it semed that fewer children were on their own even though they had reached an age when marriage and independence could be expected. Single adults made up about 14% of the families. Only two families consisted of a husband and wife without children, and the percentage of husband-wife and children combinations was slightly lower than for the other two communities. The outstanding difference was in the number of families demonstrating irregular features. Over half were broken by divorce, separation, or death, and

another fourth were families in which a divorced person had remarried and children from a previous marriage were included in the family. In two other cases there were illegitimate children, and in one case three generations were living in a household.

The data presented in tables 4 and 5 and figure 3 suggest that the nuclear family in this community was experiencing considerable breakdown as a result of the transition from former Dakota family values to the ideals found in the small rural South Dakota farming or ranching community. The strain on family unity was most apparent among the younger people, and there were strong indications that they were apathetic concerning the need for establishing themselves in an independent household.

*Transpositional Community*—Statistical analysis of families in the transpositional community revealed that the largest average family size and number of children per family was found here. Although the differences from the transitional community were not great, the younger ages of adults emphasized them, since fewer families were likely to be completed when the parents were still relatively young (table 4). This community had few single person and husband-wife families, but it had the largest percentage of husband-wife and children families. Irregular families were observed in six cases, and included one broken home, two families in

FIG. 2 NUCLEAR FAMILIES TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY



which there had been a remarriage, two three generation households, and one case of adoption (table 5 and figure 4).

In the acculturation process the transpositional community appeared to have most fully accepted a non-Indian family system resembling that in non-reservation areas of South Dakota. While there were still some remnants of the traditional kinship system they were largely confined to the older people, as in the case of a grandmother rearing her grandchildren. The increased acceptance of modern family ideas of the western rural areas appeared to be accompanied by less family disruption than in the transitional community, but more than in the traditional community.

**Kinship Remnants**—The crises of culture change have caused many of the Pine Ridge Indians to at times fall back on tested ways of living. The older generation has taken the responsibility of pointing out that maintaining the old patterns will avoid the chaos which may arise in cultural change. This attitude promoted conservatism in some areas which caused educators

FIG. 3 NUCLEAR FAMILIES TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY

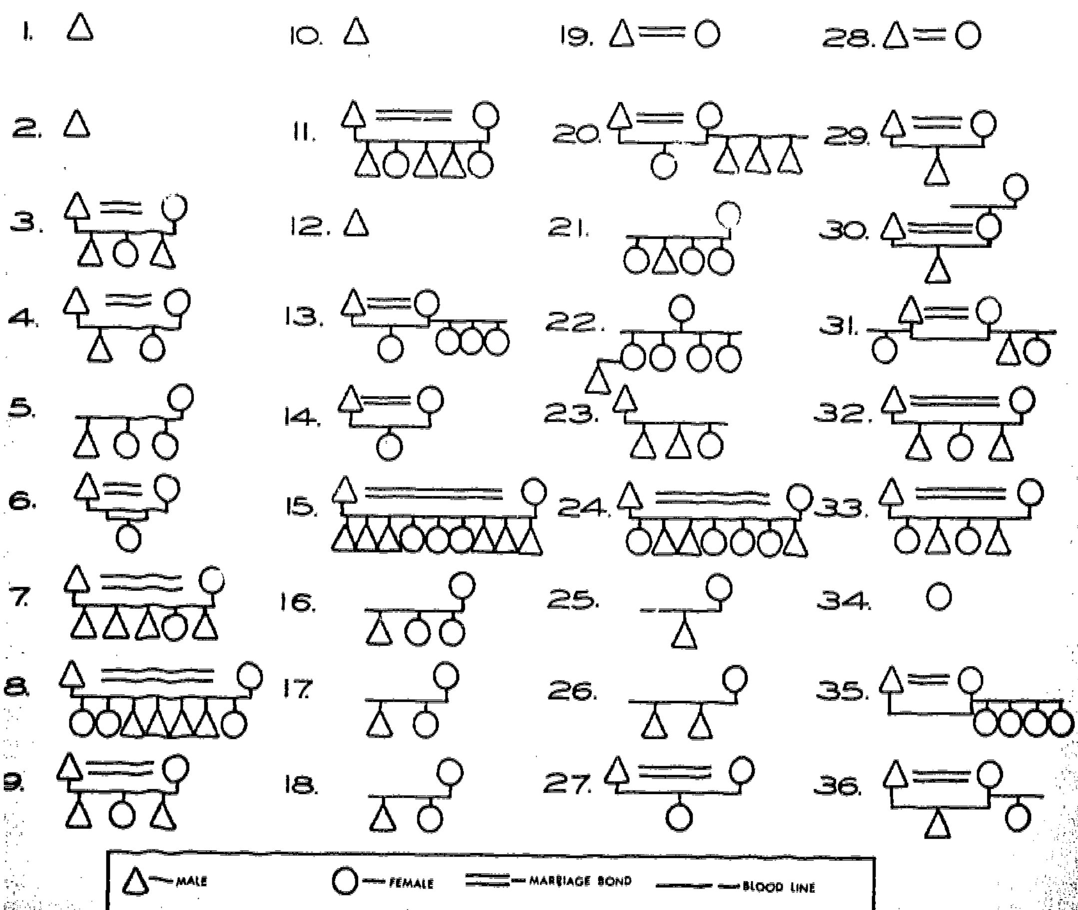
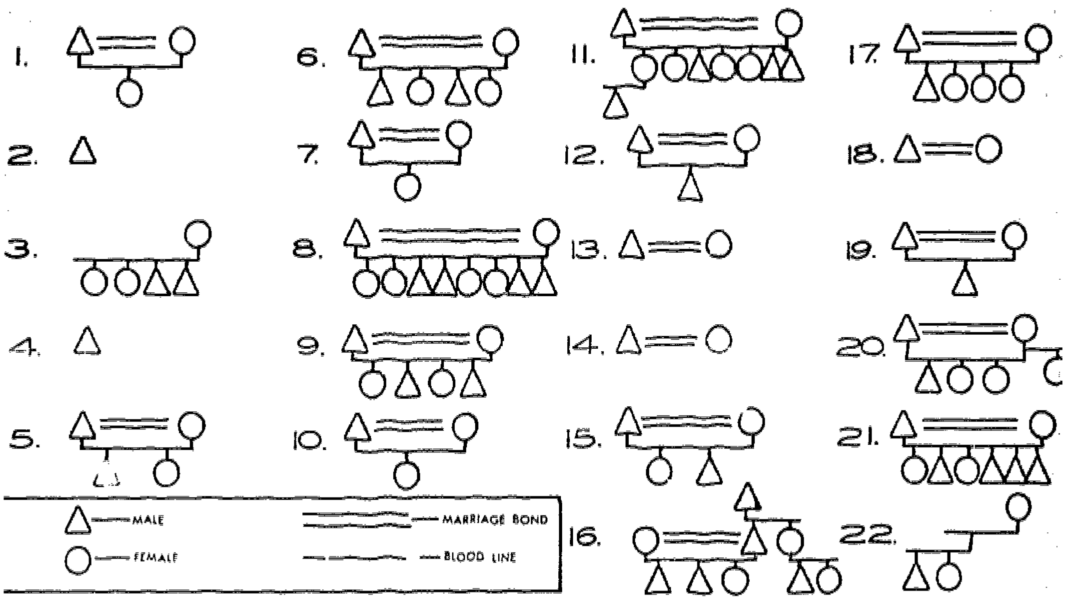


FIG. 4 NUCLEAR FAMILIES TRANSPOSITIONAL COM.




and officials consternation when they fail to appreciate its hold. It likewise has been responsible for the retention of older culture patterns and values in the area of family living.

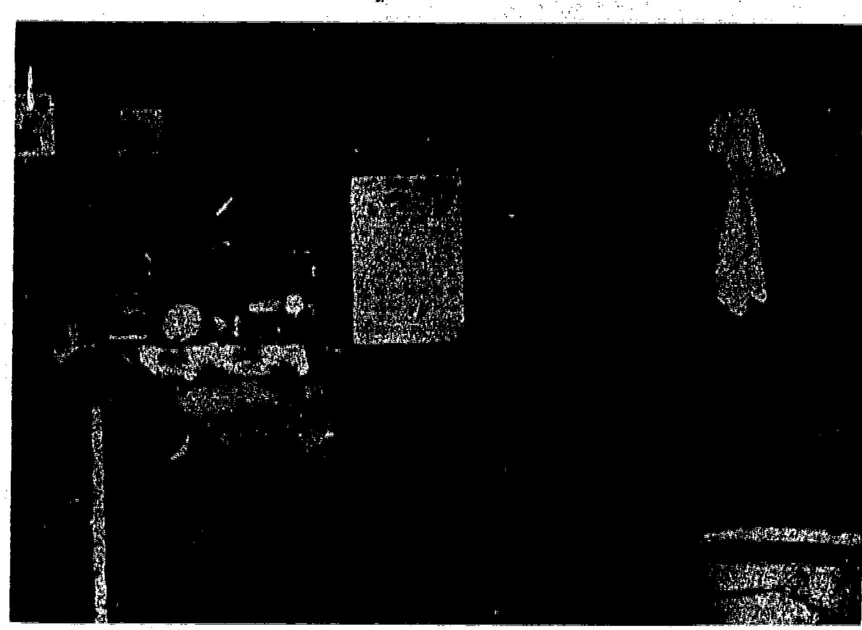
The most important practice that has continued down to the present day is mutual helpfulness. It was more than just being willing to share material possessions. There was a pride of heritage that caused

**Table 4. Nuclear Family Characteristics**

| Characteristics | Traditional Community | Transitional Community | Transpositional Community | 1950 Area Census |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average Family Size | 3.71 | 4.38 | 4.50 | 3.47 |
| Average No. of Children in Family | 1.96 | 2.67 | 2.77 | 1.72 |
| Average Ages | | | | |
| Husband | 56.9 | 55.6 | 54.2 | ...... |
| Wife | 51.0 | 50.5 | 44.9 | ..... |

**Table 5. Nuclear Family Composition**

| Family Types | Traditional Community | | Transitional Community | | Transpositional Community | | 1950 Area Census | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Single Individual | 7 | 25.0 | 5 | 13.9 | 3 | 13.6 | 59 | 15.0 |
| Husband-Wife | 5 | 17.8 | 2 | 5.6 | 3 | 13.6 | 50 | 12.7 |
| Husband-Wife-Children | 11 | 39.4 | 13 | 36.1 | 10 | 45.5 | 172 | 43.8 |
| Irregular Families | 5 | 17.8 | 16 | 44.4 | 6 | 27.3 | 112 | 28.5 |
| **Totals** | **28** | **100.0** | **36** | **100.0** | **22** | **100.0** | **393** | **100.0** |



**A number of the families consist of only husband and wife with no children or grown children.**

a man to say to his relative who needed help and reassurance, "So come and eat; come and stay here if you have no other place. You can count on us; we are not aliens."[20] These ideas were implicit in the request for help, and no one of reasonable standing in a Dakota community would dare refuse it even though he knew he could not afford it.

The practices which have been retained and the degree of participation vary according to the individual and the community. Remnants of the *tiyospaye* were apparent in the three communities investigated in this study. Related families were clustered in groups forming extended family neighborhoods. Some of the families were also related to people in the other neighborhoods or communities, although in most cases their primary attachment was to their near neighbors. Diagrams of the relationships in each community are presented in figures 5, 6, and 7, and patterns of relationship should be described for each community.

*Traditional Community* – There were three primary group neighborhoods apparent in this community. The first of these neighborhoods was the most isolated, retaining a definite old culture atmosphere, which was observed especially in their pattern of group living. There were 11 families in the

[20]South Dakota Department of Public Instruction, *Indians of South Dakota*, page 46.

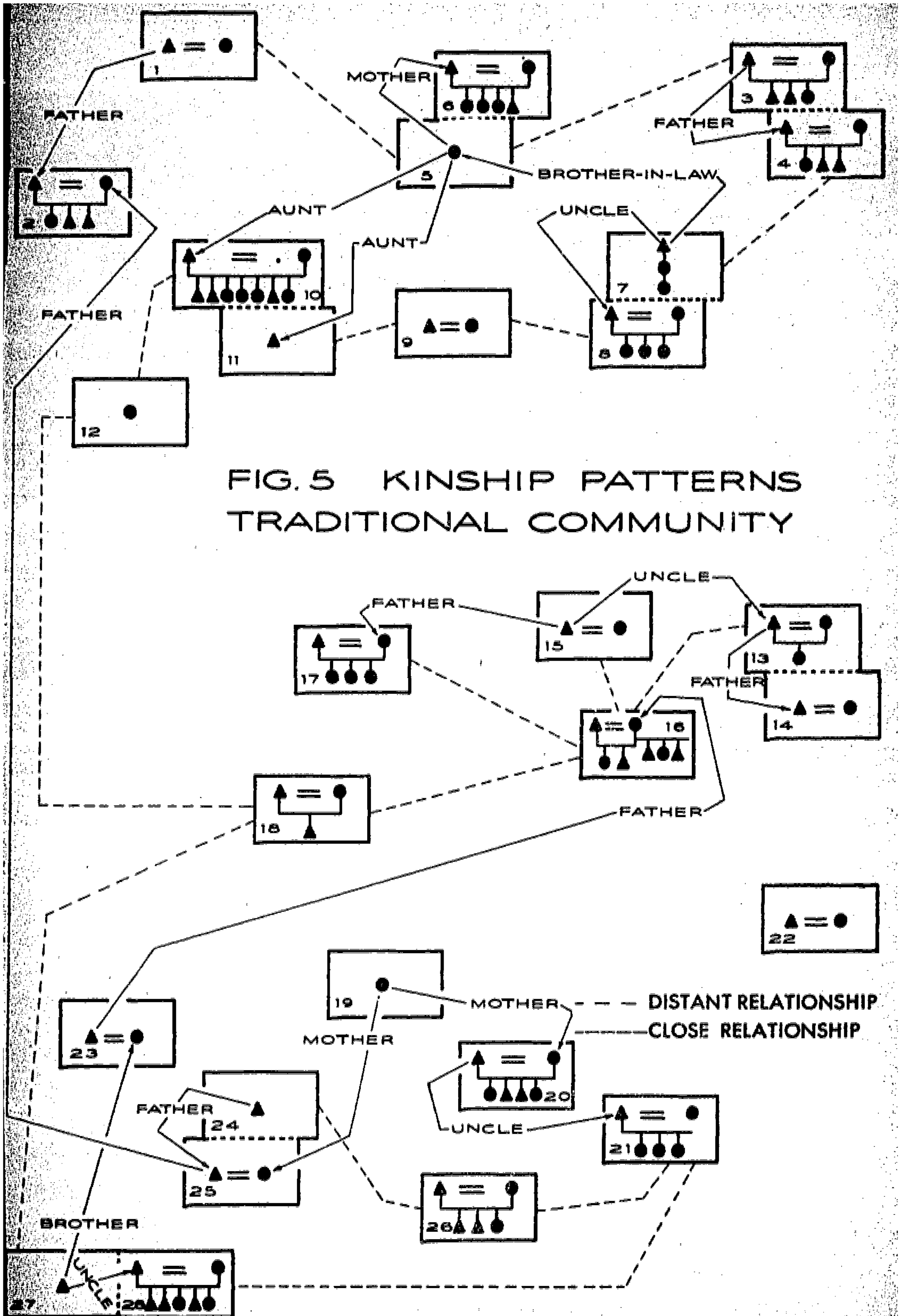



FIG. 5 KINSHIP PATTERNS TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY

neighborhood centering around an elderly widow who was attached to other families by four close and six distant relationships.[30] Her influence was not obvious, but a recognized kind of permissive leadership, emphasizing unity and cooperation. The second neighborhood consisted of seven families centering around an elderly couple with three close and two distant relationships. Its unity was reduced by the comparatively slight relationship of two families to others in the group and nearly equal relationship to families in the first and third neighborhoods. The third neighborhood had one focus on a widowed mother and her two married daughters, and the other on an older man, his married son and nephew. This division was heightened by a number of close relationships outside of this neighborhood and the community. One of the ten families in the neighborhood was a definite isolate, with no relationships, close or distant, to any other family in the community.

The extensive kinship ties among all 28 families can be measured in terms of the number of close and distant relationships which can be identified in the three neighborhoods. In the first there were 8 close and 17 distant relationships; in the second 4 close and 8 distant relationships; and in the third 7 close and 10 distant. Between neighborhoods there were 2 close and 3 distant relationships. In the whole community then there were 21 close and 38 distant relationships. If these were equally distributed among the 28 families, each would average .75 close and 1.36 distant relationships and a total of 2.11 relationships per family.

*Transitional Community* – Four primary neighborhoods and a few scattered relationships comprised the transitional community. The apparent leader of the first neighborhood was the husband in an old family. He was closely related to the other five families in the neighborhood, and was recognized on the basis of tradition since his father was an important leader of the kinship group for which the community was named. In addition he represented the preservation of traditional culture and the epitomy of fine Dakota character.

The second group lacked unification but included a widowed male, the families of his married daughter and son, the family of a brother and his son-in-law, and two brothers who are only slightly attached to the neighborhood by relationship. One of these brothers exhibited considerable independence of the local group, and was an elected leader for the whole area. He was considered to have the respect of the community accompanied by envy of his position.

The next neighborhood was held together by a widowed male advanced in years, his three sons and one grandson. One of the sons had become a minister and lived at some distance from the primary area, and was not as closely at-

[30]Any relative nearer than cousin is defined as close; all others recognized, no matter how far removed, are defined as distant.

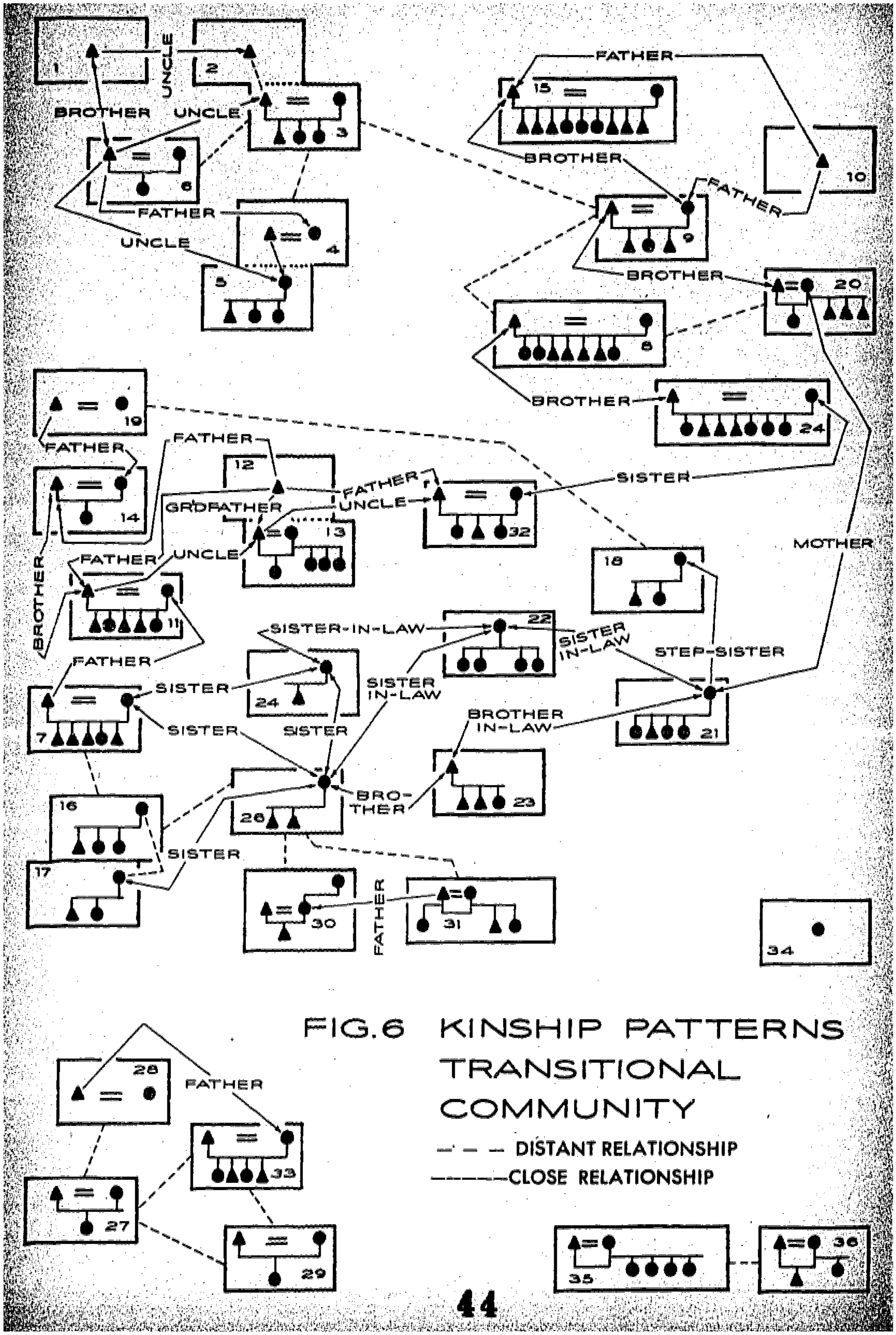



FIG.6 KINSHIP PATTERNS TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY

— — — DISTANT RELATIONSHIP
———— CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

tached to the group as the others. This was likewise the case with the parents-in-law of one of the sons.

The fourth grouping was characterized by a large number of disrupted families. The leader appeared to be a widow with two grown sons who were unmarried. She had three sisters, a brother, a sister-in-law, and two more distant relatives in the nine families comprising this neighborhood. Only one of the families was complete: seven consisted of a mother and children, and one of a father and children.

The other nine families had no definite pattern. There was one definite isolate, and two having one distant community relationship. The distribution of relationships in the order of the four neighborhoods discussed above was as follows: (1) 7 close and 7 distant; (2) 5 close and 4 distant; (3) 11 close and no distant; (4) 13 close and 3 distant. Among the rest of the families which could not be definitely tied to a neighborhood there were 2 close and 7 distant relationships. Between the four neighborhods the results were 3 close and 2 distant relationships. The totals for the community of 41 close and 23 distant, resulted in an average of 1.14 close and .64 distant or 1.78 relationships per family.

The average number of relationships was lower than in the traditional community when both close and distant relationships were combined. However, the averages were reversed on the close and distant distinction. This may be significant because close relatives were more willing to share and take care of the broken family which appeared most frequently in the transitional community. The extended relationships of the traditional community were really closer than they appeared when classified by the system usually employed in American society. In other words, some relationships classified as distant in the traditional community were really nearer than some of those classified as close in the transitional community.

*Transpositional Community*—There were two loosely related neighborhoods in this community that appeared to have only a limited degree of identification. It was difficult to discern any leadership in either group, since the relationships were more or less random. Three families were isolated with no relationships in the community, and one family could not be definitely attached to either neighborhood. There were eight families which appeared to belong to the first group, and ten in the second. Close relationships were found 7 times in group one and 12 times in group two. Distant relations were mentioned 5 times in group one and 2 times in group two. There were 2 distant relationships between groups one and two. The totals were 19 close, 9 distant, and 28 total relationships, yielding averages of .86 close, .41 distant, and 1.27 total relationships per family. The explanation for the differential between traditional and transitional communities in close and distant relationships ap-

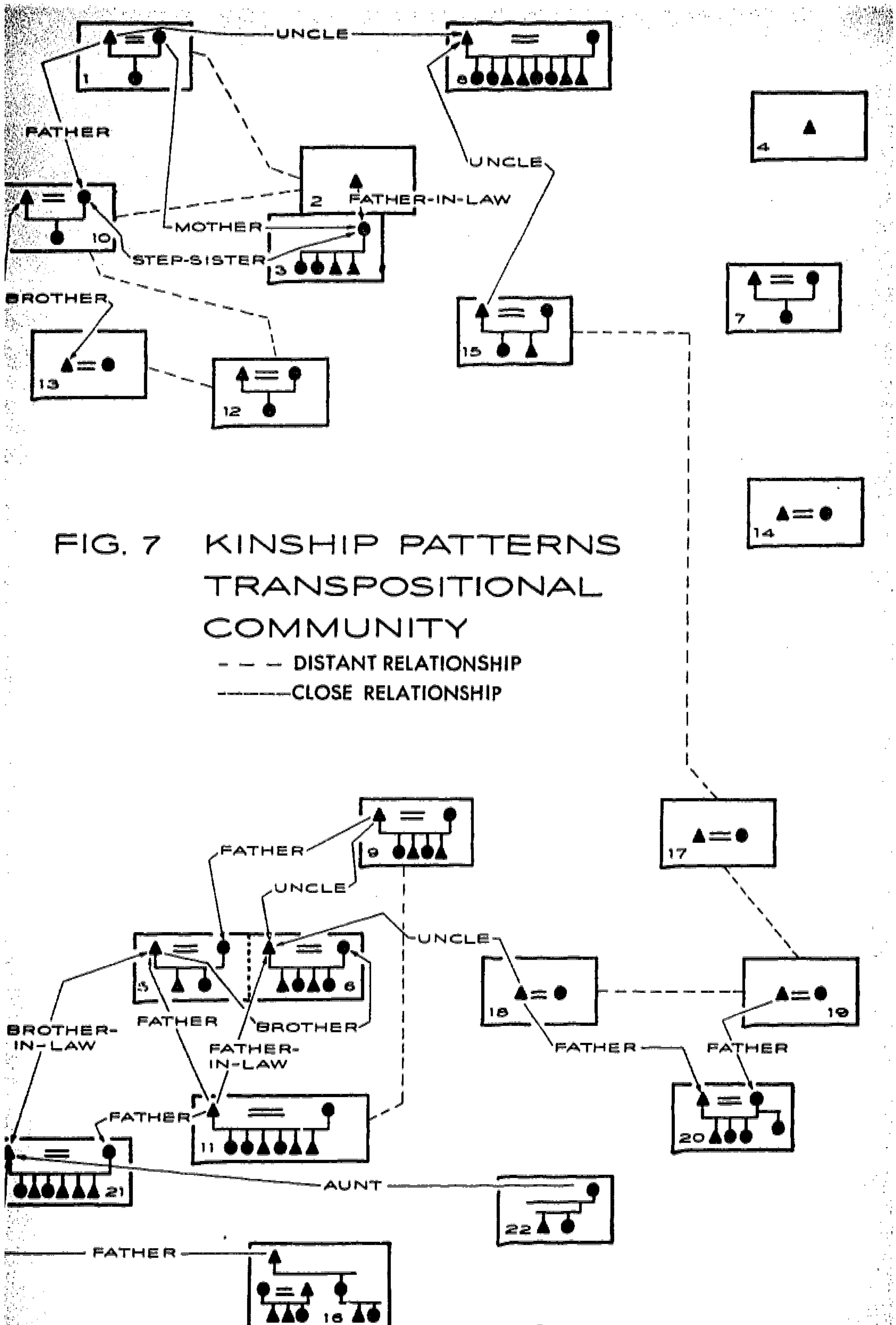



FIG. 7 KINSHIP PATTERNS TRANSPOSITIONAL COMMUNITY

peared to be supported by these results.

Each cluster of families distinguished on the basis of their relationships may have had some additional relatives in other neighborhoods or communities. It was, however, in the remnant of the *tiyospaye* that essential primary group functions, such as sharing, visiting, and neighboring were continuing in modified form. The vitality of primary group functions indicated the degree to which the *tiyospaye* satisfied important social needs. An attempt has been made to measure their continued effectiveness in each of the communities on the basis of participation in a variety of group activities. The indices of community participation used were: (1) sharing use of home; (2) sharing use of land; (3) visiting; (4) social activities; and (5) neighborhood activities. Table 6 reports the results of this investigation.

1. Sharing Homes—The customary practices of hospitality in Dakota culture were based on the belief in kinship loyalty and interdependence which held the group structure intact. Offering food and shelter to a relative was an obligatory responsibility that no conscientious person would dare shirk, if he desired to maintain his status in the group. Hospitality worked well when everyone had enough to share, and for some families was a necessity if they were to survive on even a meager subsistence. Mutual helpfulness may be even more essential to survival in some reservation communities today. To those who have accumulated goods or wealth, sharing may be usually regarded abusive of their ambition to succeed in the material values of non-Indian society. Conversely, to the reservation Indian sharing may mean that everyone should contribute to the group subsistence because of their generosity to their kinsmen. When starvation was eminent, an appeal to relatives for food was unnecessary, because there was the realization that sharing meager supplies was a more acceptable alternative than starvation.

Sharing of homes for a period longer than a short visit was relatively common in the three communties studied. The traditional community had half of the families living in a home occupied by more than one family. In addition some of the others had individuals or families living with them for a considerable period during the year. The three cases most commonly encountered were: (1) older relatives taking in a divorced or separated younger spouse and children; (2) grandchildren being cared for by grandparents while the children's parents were absent, perhaps working in seasonal work off the reservation; and (3) young married couples living temporarily with parents or relatives during the winter months when they were not able to obtain agricultural or construction work off the reservation. This last group was most difficult to categorize as members of the community. They were arbitrarily included, since they usually resided in the community for about six months

each year. The transitional and transpositional communities were consistent with the theory that sharing was a value of Dakota culture which declined as the family more nearly emulated the values of non-Indian society. There were about 10% fewer families sharing homes in the transpositional than in the transitional, and the same proportion fewer in the transitional than in the traditional.

2. Share Use of Land—Cooperative use of land appeared to have considerable appeal to those families which were utilizing at least a portion of the land that they owned. A little less than one-fourth of the families in the transpositional community reported that they were sharing their land with relatives, and at the opposite extreme, nearly half of the transitional community respondents reported land sharing. However, in the traditional community the results on this question did not follow the expected pattern. Instead of greater sharing of land, the proportion was only a little more than a fourth. The explanation appeared in the low rate of land utilization and the small size of homesteads (see table 3). Sharing of land was greatly limited by the fact that most families using land had only a small acreage for a homestead and garden and very little land in agricultural production.

The patterns of sharing for the three communities has been diagrammed in Figures 8, 9, and 10. These figures suggest additional conclusions: (1) sharing within the community decreased moving from the traditional to the transpositional community; (2) sharing outside the community increased moving in the opposite direction; and (3) the pattern of sharing was closely associ-

**Three generations in a single home is not unusual.**

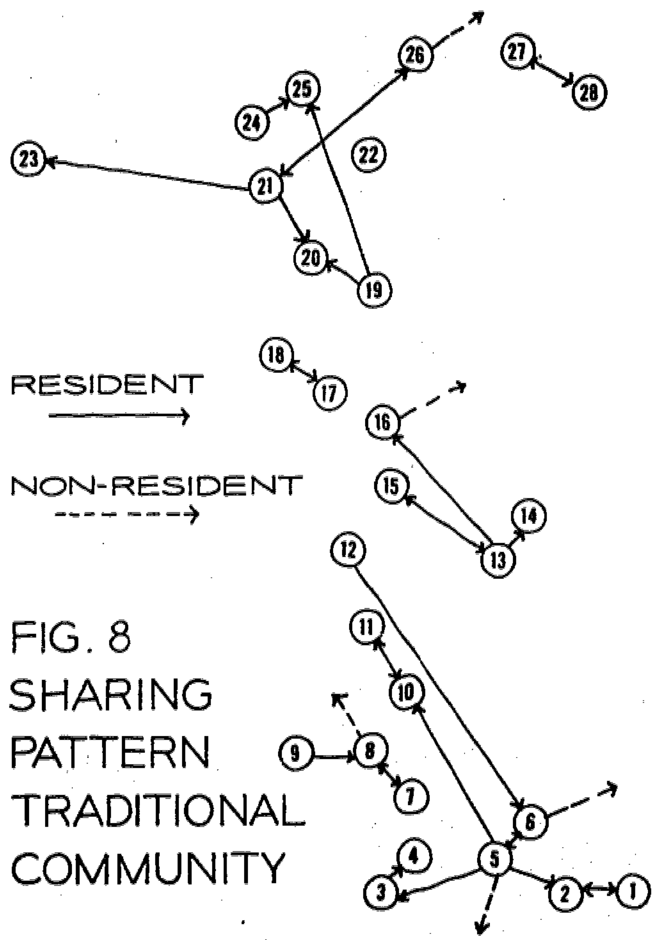



FIG. 8
SHARING
PATTERN
TRADITIONAL
COMMUNITY

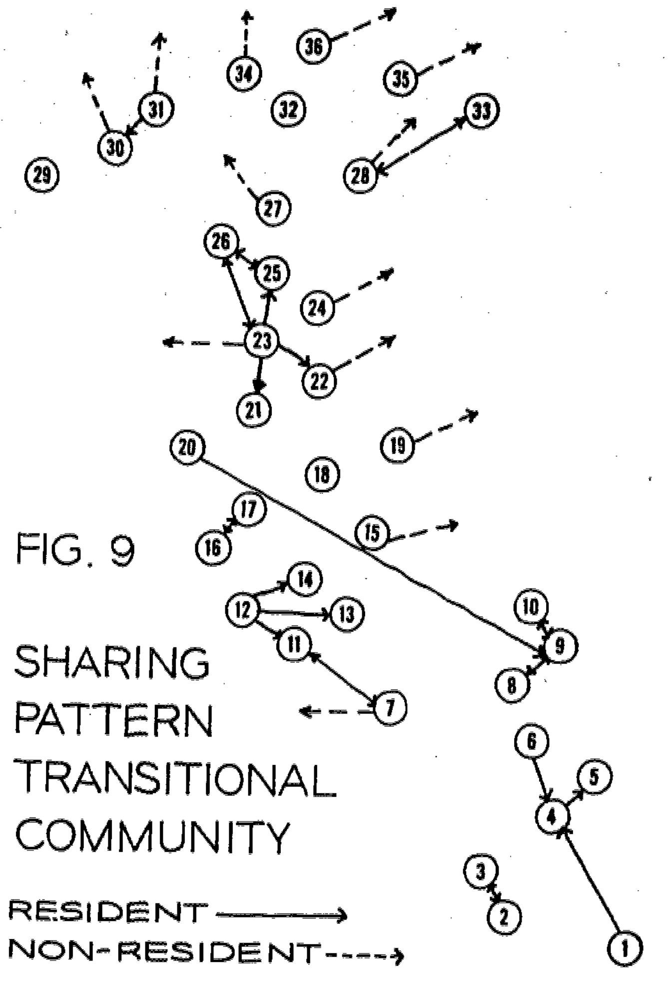



FIG. 9

SHARING PATTERN TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY

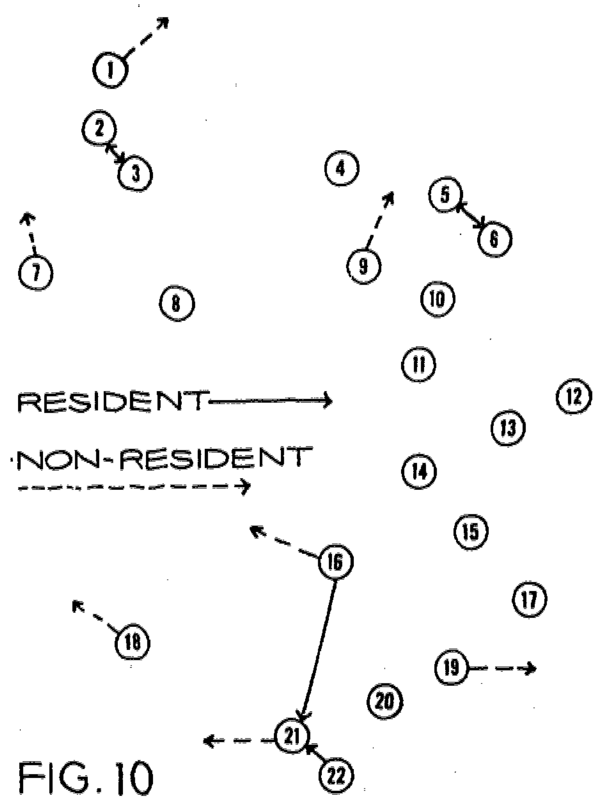



FIG. 10
SHARING PATTERN
TRANSPOSITIONAL
COMMUNITY

ated with the related or kinship neighborhood previously described.

3. Visiting Choices—In the old Dakota culture visiting as well as sharing was an essential part of the hospitality practice among kinsmen. Any time a family was traveling some distance from their own people, they could request food and shelter from anyone, and the manners of kinship required the most remote relative to open his home to the visitor. It was also customary for individuals and families to visit extensively within their own kinship group, and when the annual celebrations were held, a major activity was the inter-group visiting.

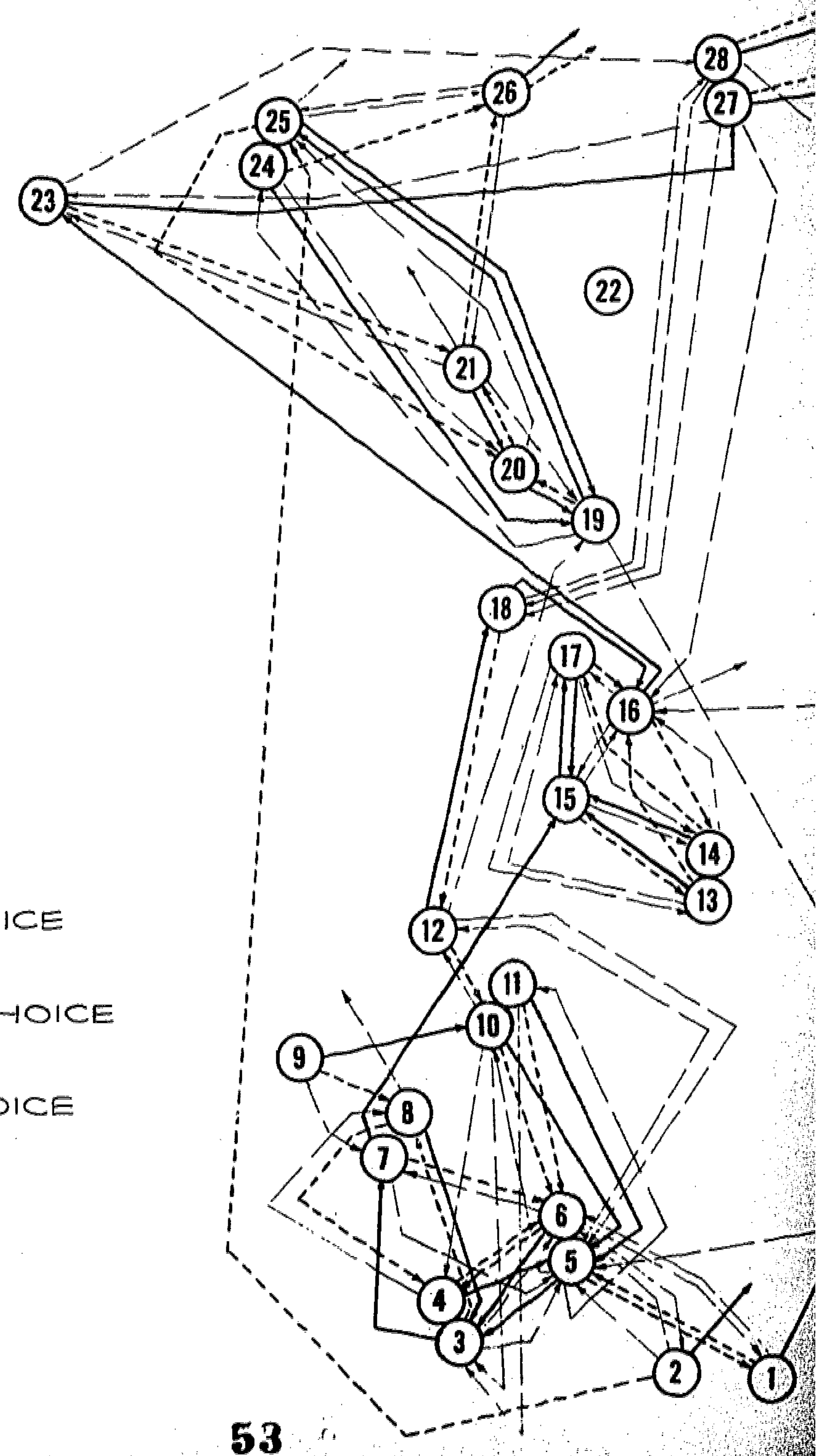
It seemed likely that the community holding most strongly to the old customs would tend to exhibit the greatest amount of visiting. Based on the visiting choices per family this tendency was verified (see table 6). The trend was even more evident when visiting choices outside the community were observed in 11.7% of the cases in the traditional community, 14.4% in the transitional community, and 33.3% in the transpositional community. If these choices were eliminated, the averages for visiting choices per family were 3.21, 2.94, and 1.64 respectively for the three communities. This modification suggested that the transpositional community has virtually adopted a new pattern of inter-community visiting.

The visiting patterns in the three communities diagrammed in figures 11, 12, and 13 indicated the following generalizations: (1) neighborhood visiting predominated in the traditional community; both neighborhood and inter-group visiting were common in the transitional community; and inter-neighborhood and community visiting were typical of the transpositional com-

Table 6. Indices of Community Participation

| Indices | Traditional Community | Transitional Community | Transpositional Community |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Share Use of Home (%) | 60.7 | 50.0 | 40.9 |
| 2. Share Use of Land (%) | 28.6 | 47.2 | 22.7 |
| 3. Average Number of Visiting Choices per Family | 3.68 | 3.47 | 2.45 |
| 4. Participation in Social Activities (%) | 82.1 | 66.7 | 51.5 |
| a. Joking | 96.4 | 72.2 | 54.5 |
| b. Gossiping | 67.9 | 61.1 | 50.0 |
| c. Discusing old times | 82.1 | 66.7 | 50.0 |
| 5. Participation in Neighborhood Activities (Average number of times a month) | 21.05 | 17.51 | 12.50 |
| a. Exchanging Work | 4.36 | 4.39 | 2.95 |
| b. Exchanging Equipment | 2.58 | 3.70 | 2.41 |
| c. Lending Food | 8.89 | 5.31 | 4.68 |
| d. Lending Money | 2.08 | 1.83 | 1.14 |
| e. Attending Feast and Celebrations | 3.14 | 2.28 | 1.32 |

# FIG. 11 VISITING PATTERN TRADITIONAL COMMUNIT




FIRST CHOICE

SECOND CHOICE

THIRD CHOICE

FIG. 12 VISITING PATTERN TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY

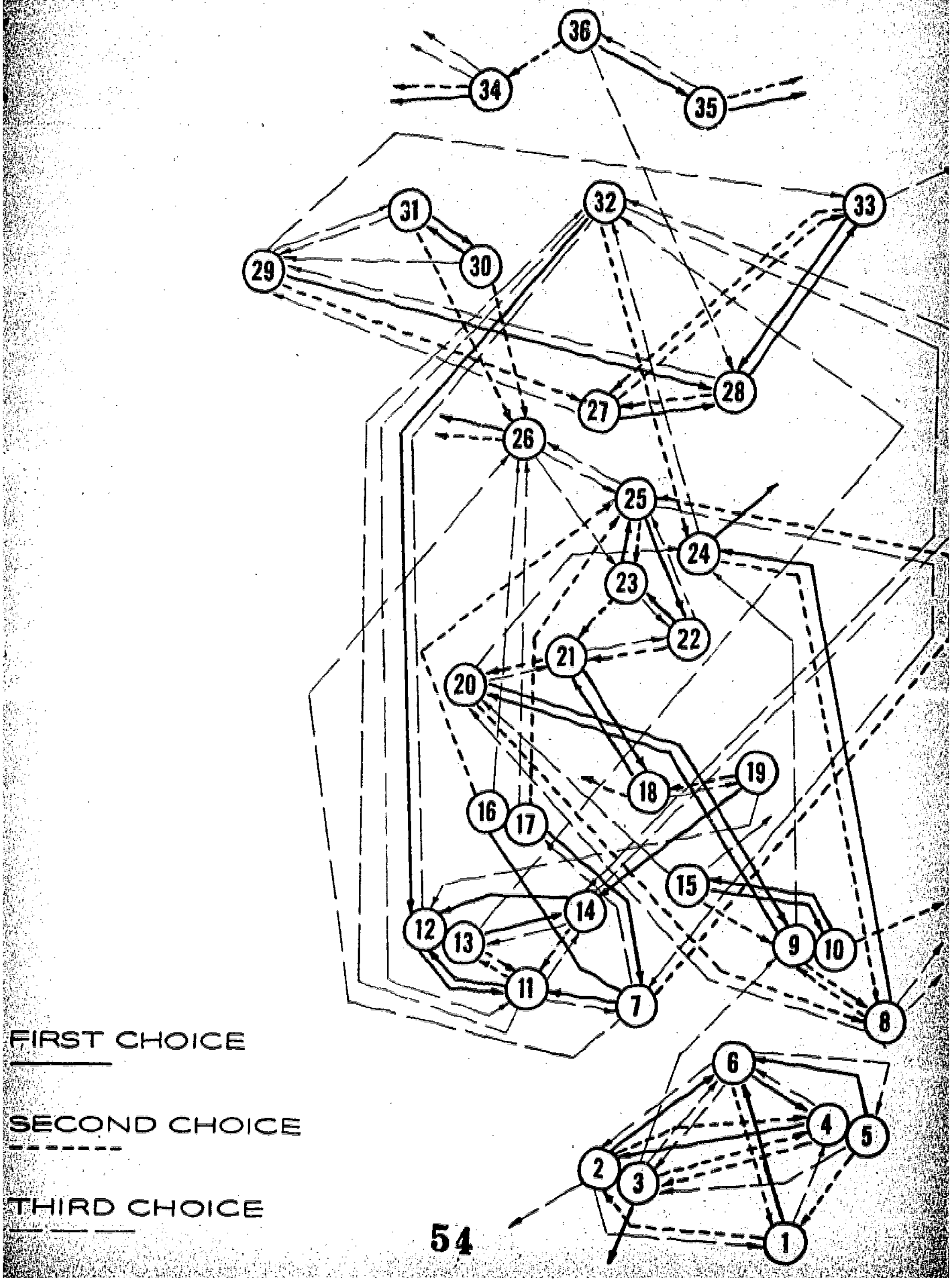
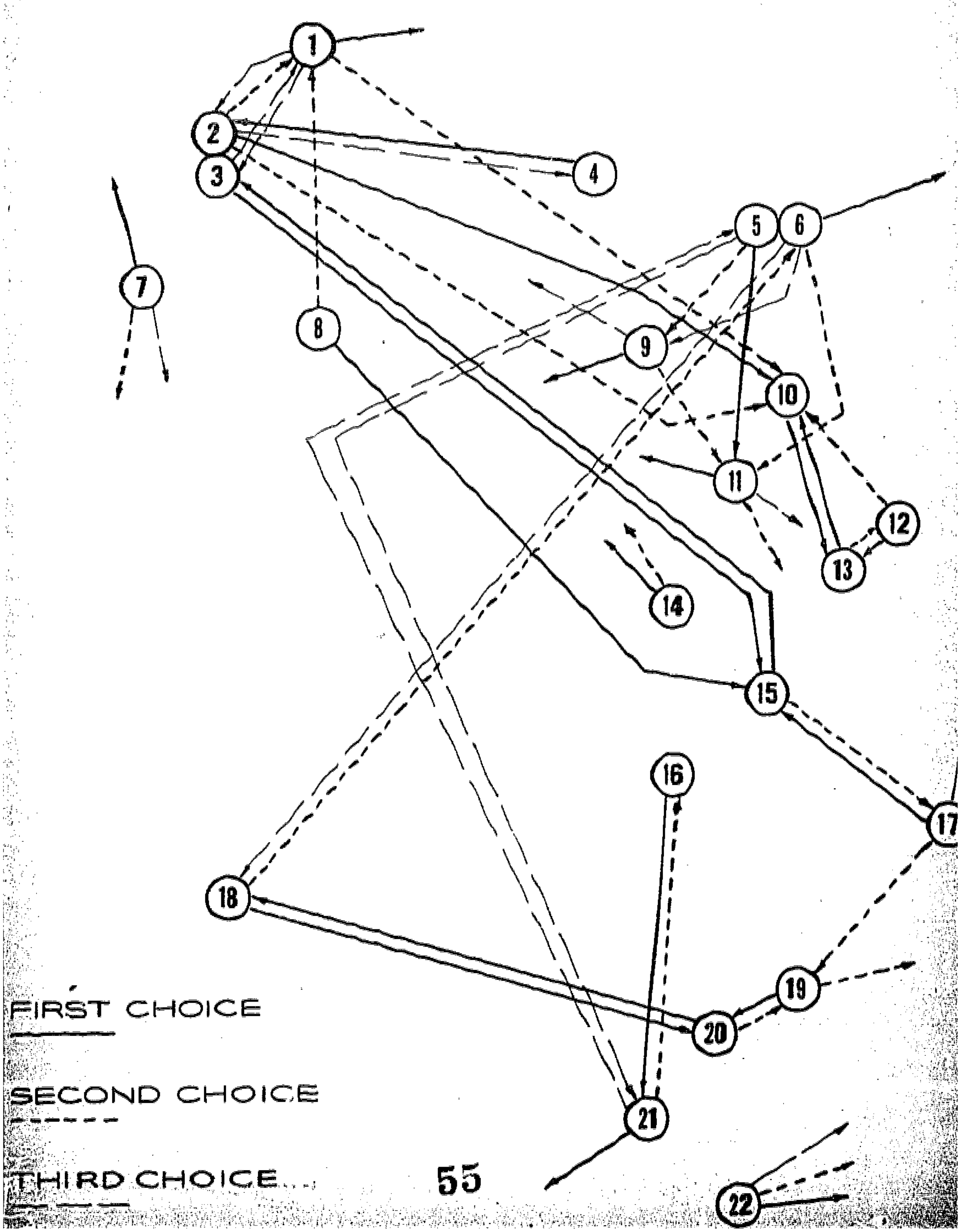


FIG. 13 VISITING PATTERN
TRANSPOSITIONAL COMMUNITY



munity; (2) isolates, having no choices by other members of the community, appeared in increasing numbers from the traditional to the transitional to the transpositional community (one, two, and four), but their infrequency make it impossible to reach definite conclusions; and (3) mutual choices occurred 31 times in the traditional community; 38 times in the transitional community, and only 10 times in the transpositional community. The averages per family were 1.11, 1.05, and .45 respectively. This evidence offered additional support to the hypothesis that the family in the traditional community retained the most remnants of Dakota customs.

4. Participation in Social Activities —The indices selected to measure participation in social activities were joking, gossiping, and discussing old times. Each person who was questioned was asked if he participated with neighbors in these three activities. The percentage of "yes" answers for each activity was compared for the communities studied in table 6. The averages for all three indicated that these activities, which were assumed to be indicative of emphasis on Dakota cultural values, have been retained to the greatest extent in the traditional community. They were assumed to function as a means of preserving the values of kinship, since they could frequently be observed to sanction proper group behavior. Gossip, particularly, was used as a means of censuring or praising the behavior of members of the local community.

Social activities such as joking, gossiping, and discussing the past functioned in these communities as an additional reason for visiting and as a means of reducing the effects of reservation isolation. For example, local news spread rapidly and unusually accurately on the reservation in spite of the lack of telephones, newspapers, and other means of communication. Any small item of new information was excuse enough for a visit to relay by word of mouth the latest gossip. Since news was limited, the other social forms of communication, joking and discussing old times, supplemented the primary justification for visiting.

5. Participation in Neighborhood Activities—The final indices of participation in community activities were classified as forms of neighborhood socialization and included exchanging work and equipment, lending food and money, and attending feasts and celebrations. The frequency of each of these activities was ascertained by asking the number of times during the last month the respondent had participated in a specific activity.

The results presented in table 6 suggest: (1) exchanging work and equipment was most frequently practiced in the transitional community which had more reason for these activities since there was more agricultural activity than in the traditional community, and a greater tendency toward sharing than the transpositional community; (2) lending food and money, remnants of the traditional sharing patterns,

An important social activity in the community is traditional Indian dancing.

followed the expected pattern of frequency; (3) attending feasts and celebrations was a remnant of the traditional hospitality pattern and also followed the expected pattern; (4) the composite frequency for all neighborhood activities indicated once again the validity of thesis that the unity of the traditional community was based on retention of values in earlier Dakota culture.

The changes in Dakota culture have been tremendous, but the evidence clearly points out that its remnants were still influential in these Pine Ridge communities. Many child-rearing practices were retained, and the child learned his purpose in life in a controlled family environment. The nuclear family reflected the older cultural practices which were fully revealed in the retention of some elements of the kinship group of *tiyospaye*. The elements of the hospitality and sharing patterns which have not disappeared from these communities offered clear support for the fact that changes have not been able to eliminate some essential aspects of the Dakota culture. In the next section the implications of the comparison between the traditional and contemporary Indian family will be given consideration.

# V. Evaluation and Implications of Cultural Change

The history of the Great Plains reveals of series of events which are marked by a serious lack of understanding of the cultural values, social organization, and patterns of living of the Western Dakota Indians. The result was a gradual straining of relations between the Indians and the United States government, precipitating eventual warfare and suppression of the Teton Dakota on reservations. The army took the position that the Dakota people must be forced by military might into submission. The attitudes of the frontiersmen toward the Indians were dominated by the desire for land.[31]

The Indian policy of the United States government during the early reservation period was based on their own dogmatic concepts of what was best for the Indians. The government agents "never contacted a Dakota chief without at once trying to persuade him to don a stiff-bosomed white shirt, a black suit, and a shiny silk hat. At the root of all their high-sounding policy talk lay this earnest desire, to make the Indians over into as perfect imitations as possible of their own perfect selves."[32]

The attempts of the government to make the Dakotas over into imitation white people met great resistance at first. Then as the officials learned more about the Indians, mostly the hard way, they began to force them in the direction they termed progress. The defeated Dakotas appeared tractable, but they changed very little. They became accustomed to many strange shifts in government policy, much official foolishness, "a good sprinkling of downright wickedness, some noble actions, and a goodly count of lessons hardly learned and, too often, quickly forgotten."[33]

The results of culture change have been vitally effective in the history of the Dakota family. Some of the areas in which these results have been most noticeable should be given additional evaluation, and implications for the future should be suggested. The suggestions indicated will be based on the assumption that if changes appear desirable, they should not contribute to greater disruption, but rather add to the unity of the Pine Ridge family.

**Economic Conditions of the Family**—The major factors in the subsistence of the Plains Indians were the large herds of buffalo and the posession of horses required for hunting the bison. In addition to food, the Dakotas depended upon the buffalo for clothing and shelter. To protect the herds against the encroachments of neighboring tribes, horses were necessary for fighting as well as hunting, and this animal

[31] R. G. Athearne, *William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West*, page 106.

[32] George F. Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, page 150.

[33] *Ibid*, pages 319-320.

came to symbolize wealth and prestige in the tribal group. The demise of the bison herds, then, completely destroyed their economic base.

The Dakotas were unable to find a satisfactory substitute basis for their economy when the buffalo disappeared. The drudgery of working in the soil was completely alien to the Dakota outlook on life, and steady toil was not an activity which appealed to them. They were also aware that land of great value to the whites had been taken from them, and their belief that government owed them a free living was verified by the treaty agreements promising them rations in return for giving up their hunting grounds. Since their habits were still those of the hunter they constantly complained because the rations were quickly dissipated in feasts and sharing. Just as in the old hunting days when they feasted after a big kill, the rations were eaten in a few days, and then they squeezed through on any foods available until the next ration day.

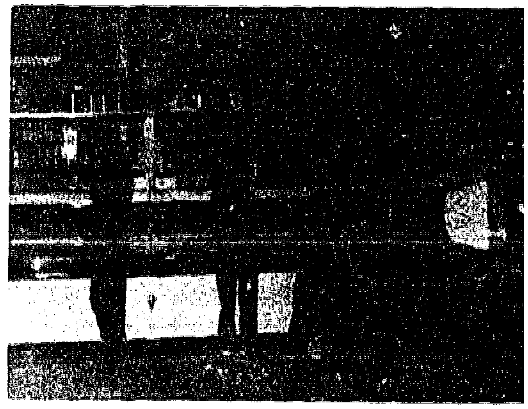
As the Pine Ridge families began to settle on the land and make an effort to support themselves, rations were gradually withdrawn. The method of reducing rations tended to penalize the man who was self-sufficient. At one time a system of reservation work projects was started, and all able-bodied men were required to perform a certain amount of labor in return for money or rations. There was, however, no encouragement for them to develop their allotted land while working in a laboring gang on some other part of the reservation. Later, improvements on the homestead were accepted as creditable work for the receipt of rations, and agency farmers were employed to assist the Indians in gaining some self-sufficiency through agriculture.

The major reservation problem always has been and will continue to be that of providing a subsistence level of living. It is questionable whether even 50% of the Pine Ridge families can be self-supporting on the income from land leases, stock raising, wage labor, and salaried employment which are currently available. The relief load is extremely heavy, particularly during the winter months when the demands for seasonal labor are minimal. Government and other welfare agencies contribute to the economic support of nearly half of the Pine Ridge families. The government also distributes surplus food commodities to those families who are in dire need.

Undoubtedly some of the families which are proportedly self-sufficient are living on woefully inadequate incomes. Observers well acquainted with these families are unable to fully explain how these people are able to survive on the quantity of food they purchase. In two of the communities, which served as the basis for this study, it appeared that only about a third of the families had adequate financial resources to meet their obligations for food and other necessities at the general store located in the area.

The statistical analysis of buying

practices and sources of income in table 7 revealed that credit buying and dependence on government aid as the main source of income were common practices. In many cases families receiving government aid checks were making all purchases during the month on credit. When the government check arrived, it was applied against the accumulated account which was frequently larger than the amount received. The high cost of transportation and the extensive credit risk caused the prices in the general store to average 10 to 50% above prices in the towns near the reservation. These towns were likely to be located many miles from the Indian family homestead (see table 8).



**Retail goods must usually be purchased at the only general store in the area.**

Many of the younger people have been leaving the reservation either to find seasonal work or with the intention of gaining permanent employment. The seasonal workers have been striving to accumulate funds to tide them through the winter months, but failing in their efforts, have been forced to depend upon some sort of government aid. The problems' in off-reservation employment were many: (1) lack of knowledge of competitive economic practices; (2) reservation way of life did not prepare people for steady employment; (3) work was valued only for the satisfaction

**Table 7. Purchasing Practices**

| Practice | Traditional Community | | Transpositional Community | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1. Pay Cash | 8 | 28.6 | 9 | 40.9 |
| 2. Buy on Credit | 20 | 71.4 | 13 | 59.1 |
| 3. Lack of Ability to Pay | 19 | 67.9 | 12 | 54.5 |
| 4. Buyer | | | | |
| a. Mother | 18 | 64.2 | 13 | 59.1 |
| b. Father | 5 | 17.9 | 3 | 13.6 |
| c. Both | 5 | 17.9 | 6 | 27.3 |
| 5. Main Source of Income | | | | |
| a. Government Aid | 11 | 39.3 | 6 | 27.3 |
| b. Lease of Land Sale | 6 | 21.4 | 5 | 22.7 |
| c. Odd Jobs | 4 | 14.3 | 5 | 22.7 |
| d. Cattle | 3 | 10.7 | 5 | 22.7 |
| e. None | 4 | 14.3 | 1 | 4.6 |

of immediate needs; (4) needy relatives may expect the working person to share his income; (5) discrimination was practiced in employment in many of the off-reservation communities; and (6) Indians were regarded as potential relief or police problems by officials in these communities.

These circumstances may be sufficient to cause the young Indian to feel that he lacks the employment skills, the social graces, and helping friends which are required for urban employment. The reservation serves as a sanctuary where people will understand his inability to cope with these problems and help him achieve a degree of comfort and security. Thus, some of the young people trained for outside employment are staying at home and accepting government employment or remaining idle. Conversely, the college trained youth may be unable to find acceptable opportunities on the reservation, and may practice his profession elsewhere.

Conclusions regarding economic conditions of the Pine Ridge family are discouraging. This is particularly true, for in spite of all the efforts of the federal government for the economic and social well-being of the Indian people, they have not been able to achieve a reasonable level of living through the combined farming-wage work type of economic adjustment required on the reservation. They remain "the worst fed, the worst clad, and worst housed" of any minority group in our country. It is obvious above all that any recommendations need to be aimed at improving the economic welfare of these people. The following general recommendations toward this end appear warranted from this study:

1. Increased effort devoted toward full utilization of land and other economic resources still controlled by the Indians could improve the level of living.

2. Part-time farming and salaried employment may be effectively combined for some agricultural operators who have only a limited amount of land available and are undergoing a transitional phase of community living.

3. Direct government aid to some groups, such as the aged, dependent children, and the physically handicapped, might be supplemented by social services designed to improve the usefulness of the grants to the welfare recipients.

4. A system of providing food and other necessities on reasonable credit terms and at competitive prices appears to be desirable for the welfare of the reservation consumer.

5. An educational program stressing good nutrition, utilization of inexpensive foods, and improved purchasing practices would be helpful to the women who do most of the buying and preparation of food for the family.

The following recommendations are suggested, but may require additional study:

1. Job training and preparation for non-reservation living might be encouraged for those desiring to find employment opportunities in

towns and cities in South Dakota and other states.

2. Cooperative cattle enterprises appear to have great possibilities for success in some of the more traditional communities, if good management practices are utilized and alienation of Indian lands can be curtailed.

3. Work programs providing steady employment and income might be provided by the government to all unemployed males who wish to remain on the reservation.

**Isolation of the Family** — The formation of kinship neighborhoods usually took place in areas originally selected for reasons of sentiment or cultural tradition. In many cases the site chosen was in an extremely distant part of the reservation far removed from the agency or any town or village. New communities sometimes developed in these areas as the population increased and a few of the families moved down the stream or to a nearby stream to form the nucleus of a related neighborhood. There were some families, of course, which sold or leased their lands and moved to a reservation village, but for the most part the families were widely scattered over the more remote parts of the reservation far from many of the necessary services.

The isolation of Pine Ridge families was increased by the fact that the reservation was located in a sparsely populated area of South Dakota, at a considerable distance from any major population center. Thus the possibilities of contacts between Indians and non-Indians have been limited. Secondary buying and selling relationships have predominated, but they have lacked the intimacy and frequency necessary to rapid cultural change. The Indian family has become more migratory in recent years, but they have not had the experience of repeated changes of residence and cultural contacts necessary to acceptance of the way of life of nonresident populations.

In the endeavor to measure the isolation of the three communities involved in this study, each respondent was asked the distance from his home to a variety of services. The results reported in table 8 did not provide a consistent trend for the three communities. The random location of the neighborhoods in relation to these services appeared to be a result of fortuitous conditions. For example, there were churches but no schools in the communities. The location of the nearest school and trading store in a local rural village, the agency offices at Pine Ridge, and other services in their special places resulted from circumstances which were partly dictated by chance, partly by government planning, and partly by the distribution of reservation population. There was overwhelming evidence, however, that the distances did promote isolation for all of the communities since transportation was very inadequate by the standards of most other rural areas of South Dakota.

The availability of various means of communication was used as another measure of isolation. The re-

sults are presented in table 9. Telephones were non-existent in the homes in these three communities, although there was undependable telephone service to the local village which could be used in an emergency. Radios followed the expected pattern, increasing percentage-wise from the traditional to the transpositional community. Television was just coming into the area, and the number of sets discovered was so small that no trend was apparent. Newspapers and magazines followed the uniform trend, and mail order catalogs were available and widely used by practically every family. Mail had to be called for at the post office in the trading store, as there was no rural delivery. Going to pick up the mail provided opportunities for visiting and gossiping in or near the store, but in severe weather the opportunities to receive mail were severely restricted.

The use of automobiles for transportation to the local village or neighboring towns was becoming more and more essential. Although the percentage of families owning cars was not great, the tendency to share rides and to hire transportation resulted in full utilization of the motor vehicles available to the community. Most of the cars were more than 5 years old and in poor condition, and frequent breakdowns were expected. If expensive repairs were necessary, the old car was usually abandoned in the yard, and another second-hand automobile was purchased.

Limited communication and transportation facilities did not, however, greatly impede the spread of gossip, rumors, and other unofficial information. The frequent family visits and trips to the village were acceptable substitutes for facilities, and direct contact provided better opportunity for observing the speaker and getting the message more accurately. In addition, news could be read and interpreted for those with a language barrier. Information released from the agency offices, official notices, and other news was most effectively spread by word of mouth among many of the community residents.

Some recommendations designed

**Table 8. Average Distance in Miles of Families from Services**

| Services | Traditional Community | Transitional Community | Transpositional Community |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. School | 4.0 | 8.2 | 5.3 |
| 2. Trading Store | 4.0 | 8.2 | 5.3 |
| 3. Church | 2.5 | 4.4 | 5.3 |
| 4. Hospital | 55.0 | 47.3 | 54.3 |
| 5. Movie | 41.0 | 39.6 | 42.9 |
| 6. Agency Offices | 54.0 | 46.3 | 53.3 |
| 7. Water | .6 | .6 | .51 |
| 8. Wood | 3.7 | 2.6 | 2.0 |
| **Totals** | **164.8** | **152.2** | **168.9** |

Table 9. Percent of Families with Communications Available

| Communications | Traditional Community | Transitional Community | Transpositional Community |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Telephone | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 2. Radio | 32.1 | 41.7 | 59.1 |
| 3. Television | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.5 |
| 4. Newspaper | 14.3 | 55.6 | 59.1 |
| 5. Magazines | 21.3 | 50.0 | 68.2 |
| 6. Catalog | 100.0 | 94.4 | 100.0 |
| 7. Mail | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 8. Automobile | 25.0 | 33.3 | 50.0 |

to reduce the isolation of the reservation family and community are suggested in the following paragraphs:

1. Essential services provided by the government and private agencies might be introduced more directly into activities of the reservation communities through such techniques as traveling medical clinics, visiting social workers, and direct contact by agency personnel.

2. Community organization activities might be developed and encouraged in order to get local groups to work on their social and economic problems and to provide an increased interest in community improvement.

3. Opportunities for reservation residents to travel and visit in non-reservation areas, to exchange ideas on a basis of equality, and to promote understanding of the reservation conditions among non-Indians could be increased.

4. New services, such as rural electrification, telephones, community centers for recreation and education, water works, movie theatres, and many others, might be made more accessible to the communities.

5. Educational programs designed to train the Indian people in the proper use and maintenance of new equipment and services could accompany their introduction.

6. Distinctions based on Indian and non-Indian achievements and conditions should be avoided, because dividing a group on the basis of cultural heritage may be regarded as subtle discriminatory behavior.

**Acculturation of the Family**—The sensitive observer of traditional Dakota culture could not help but be impressed by the creative vitality of these people. He usually came to admire the unity and smoothness in every part of the culture, and to realize that every man was a molding force in producing a way of life in which economic, social, religious, and aesthetic values were bound together into a significant whole. These older cultural values have been losing their validity as a result of the destructive influence of contact with Western Civilization. The Pine Ridge families have attempted to compromise with the new environment, but their willingness to change has been made

doubly difficult by the fact that they have been unable to participate fully in the new way of life. Thus they have felt a great cultural loss which could not be compensated by vague promises of a better future life. The regrettable thing about the fading away of old Dakota values was that they left apathy and discouragement in their place. The Pine Ridge Indian has, as Sapir stated it, "slipped out of the warm embrace of a culture into the cold air of fragmentary existence."[34]

The social organization in Dakota culture was based on a rather rigid prescription of statuses and roles that resulted from the system of kinship which demanded unusually close and elaborate personal relationships. Other social institutions, resulting from the free association of individuals in brotherhoods, institutionalized friendships, and secret "societies," were less important to the continuity of Dakota culture and have largely disappeared, while the kinship system, which is the real basis of social organization, has retained a tenuous, but vital integrity. The important contention is that social change among the Pine Ridge Indians has been most swift and effective in areas uncontrolled by kinship.

The application of the process of social change to the Dakota family pattern should be more fully analyzed if greater perfection in future changes is to become a reality. Answers to these important questions may be revealing: (1) why are new ideas accepted by a few innovators; (2) how does the new idea disseminate to other members of the community; and (3) what modifications result when the new idea is adjusted to the pre-existing culture matrix. These three questions will be considered separately in the following sections.

*Innovation*—Culture change rests fundamentally upon individual learning of new behavior patterns. The stimulus to learn may come from the discomfort or discontent of the individual with his present circumstances. As long as members of the Pine Ridge communities are satisfied with the strong sense of solidarity in the family group, changes will come about slowly. It is probably the marginal individual, who does not share this security, who will attempt to serve as an innovator. He will also be the least effective in influencing those members of the group who are secure and satisfied. The obvious reason is that he is likely to be considered an outsider, who is not interested in the welfare of the kinship neighborhoods, but only his own personal success.

Within the family groups innovations are most likely to appeal to the younger generation, but lacking leadership qualities and experience, they can hope to have only slight influence in changing previous generations. As the older generations fade away, and the younger people assume their place, gradual change is effected. As a general rule the grandparent generation is less acculturated than the parent genera-

[34]Edward Sapir, *Culture, Language and Personality*, pages 96-97.

tion, but there are many exceptions. Some of the grandparents speak better English and are more widely traveled and educated than some members of the younger generation. Within each group the innovators are likely to appear as those who are most dissatisfied. It is possible that in some of the Pine Ridge communities, a member of the grandparent generation who is unhappy, complaining, and considered a troublemaker is the best person to introduce new ideas into the family group.

The leadership pattern in the reservation community may be described as permissive and, therefore, the leader does not attempt to coerce others into adopting a new idea. The permissive leader does not occupy any office or position and does not make any conscious effort to influence others. He is more a leader by virtue of the influence he exerts unintentionally on those who respect him and follow his example. To gain this role, he must serve the other members of the kinship group, helping out in times of illness or adversity, providing financial assistance to those in need, and demonstrating generosity through hospitality, sharing, and gift-giving. He must also be regarded as honest in dealing with other group members, and his actions must be consistent with his verbal promises. He must strictly abide by the rules of the group, never offend the dignity of individuals, and honor others by praising them. Then group members will seek him out for advice and assistance, which must be workable and in the group interest, because he has the personal qualities which inspire their confidence.

The leadership pattern described in the previous paragraph is an ideal which can no longer be fully achieved. There is, for example, considerable evidence that many members of the younger generation are unimpressed by traditional leaders. The differences in the older and newer standards causes a conflict between generations which can not be reconciled. This conflict in values may be aggravated by a family crisis. If a child, coming from a broken home, has no relatives who will take him in, he is faced with the problem of surviving without the usual family security. Forced to care for himself, he may become an aggressive non-conformist, who will strive to discredit and challenge the older leadership.

*Dissemination*--The fact that a few innovators accept a new idea may have little influence on the group as a whole. The individual who accepts non-Indian culture values, leaves the reservation, and takes up residence in the outside world may adjust to the American culture, but his behavior has very minor effect upon the reservation community. Likewise, some members of the reservation modify their influence by assuming a dual role. In their contacts off the reservation they present the superficial appearance of adjustment to non-Indian ways, but in their own groups are still closely bound to the culture of the kinship group.

The most deceiving change in the

Pine Ridge community has been their ready acceptance of American material goods. The Dakotas could see the immediate usefulness of automobiles, radios, and many other items of household equipment, but they could accept these things without greatly changing their social values or organization. They were least likely to change the implicit values of their cultural orientation embodied in family and kinship institutions. The use of material items spread rapidly to all communities on the reservation, but they were used in a fashion that did not interfere with the continuation of pre-existing family values.

In some areas the attempts of the government and other outside agencies to forcibly suppress certain cultural practices have been countered by persistent resistance among the Pine Ridge people. The efforts to force change on them has been much less effective than the relatively permissive process which allowed them to select and copy those elements of Western Civilization which could easily be adopted into their culture without any major disruption of the customary practices. The high level of sociocultural integration that existed in the pattern of kinship behavior made resistance to forced acculturation much stronger than would have been the case in a culture which was not so tightly organized and permitted more individualism.

Enforced culture change was more apparent in the inhibition of customary practices such as plural marriages and the Sun Dance than in the introduction of new traits. Restrictions on certain types of behavior did tend to block the continuation of these practices, but it didn't cause the Dakota to change their attitudes and values. As new practices were introduced they would simply modify and reinterpret them in terms of their own value system even if the new element were a duplication of already existing practices. They were highly tolerant, for example, of the Christian marriage ceremony, but continued to practice their native marriage ritual at the same time. Difficulties were most likely to arise in a situation in which the customary marriage ceremony was forbidden, but the Christian practices did not spread rapidly as a substitute. This created a vacuum in which basic needs could not be satisfied in a fashion acceptable to either group.

The spread of new ideas among the Dakotas depended in some degree upon the nature of the two cultures. In American society the diversity and fragmentation of elements limited cultural integration, while the Dakota culture stressed the incorporation of all elements into an integrated communal organization. The latter type of culture sets up clear-cut limits on the social system, and the threat of outside ideas are viewed with some fear that their acceptance may destroy the highly valued social structure. Thus some tribal groups resisted any basic change in the structure of their kinship pattern fearing the destruction of their whole way of life.

The conditions of cultural contact

which typified Indian-White relations were also important to this complicated process of dissemination of new ideas. The persistent Anglo-American attitude of superiority and dominance over the Indians was historically derived from Puritan Colonialism and was strong enough to cause the frontiersman to discredit any other cultural heritage. These inflexible attitudes caused a definite feeling of unfriendliness and antagonism between the two groups, and prevented the formation of a "large mixed Indian - White population which would provide cultural models and reference groups along the continuum of acculturation for the conservative nuclei still living in the native-oriented Indian communities."[35]

The utility and compatibility of new culture traits in the Dakota culture and the desire of members for prestige and new experience were other factors influencing the dissemination of culture elements. Prestige and novelty were extremely important during the early stages, but as time passed and the new became commonplace, the borrowed trait had to increasingly stand or fall on its own merits. In any case, the Dakota Indians have found the path to full acculturation confusing and frustrating because they were faced with changes that the same time were novel, useful, and yet destructive of older values. They were expected to make a sudden leap into the unknown. They were expected to earn a position of full integration into American society by people whose attitudes would deny them any position of social equality.

*Modification*—Culture change in the Pine Ridge community has gradually brought the reservation population increasing involvement with the American sociocultural system. In such important areas as education, government, economics, and religion they have adopted a large number of non-Indian cultural elements. In many cases they have modified the form and meaning of new traits in order to make them more acceptable, and in times of crisis are likely to abandon them in favor of the time proven practices.

Attitudes toward acceptance of new ideas were illustrated in the early educational efforts on the reservation. The Pine Ridge children attending government schools were likely to be either resentful and incorrigible or compliant and ingratiating. In both cases the children preserved something of their former character and tradition. They had the tacit approval of their parents to avoid the educational process, or to modify what they learned to the extent that it could be readily accepted in their extended family group. In Dakota society the children had a generalized model in the whole group of passively resisting adults to imitate. The young people did not have to be reprimanded or instructed, they were keen observers of their parents. They soon per-

[35]Evan J. Vogt, "The Acculturation of American Indians," *The Annals,* 311 (May 1957), page 144.

ceived that the expected attitudes were an overt appearance of conformity and a covert retention of familiar patterns and life values definitely opposing complete assumption of certain American values.

To the individual coming from Dakota culture, the traits of a society, which appeared to possess a welter of meaningless uncoordinated practices and beliefs, were appealing only if they could be found to have some meaning and usefulness to the individual in terms of his established way of life. Thus education could only be a successful agent of social change if consideration were given to the degree and kind of modification undergone by any new culture trait introduced through the educational process. The use of the English language in the Pine Ridge communities illustrates the change in form and meaning of culture traits. There are, for example, communication difficulties in the English language based on the different meanings of words to Indians and non-Indians. In some cases the English forms have actually been changed to satisfy the need for expressing an idea that is unique in the culture of the contemporary Pine Ridge community.

In other areas additional evidence of modification can be found. The Ghost Dance contained a number of the elements of Christian religion changed slightly to fit into the current traditions. The rationalization for this apparently contradictory religious system has been suggested in the following quotation:

> Since the people were happy and contented in the old days when they had a particular culture in a particular environment, it is felt that a return to the culture will, in some way, re-establish the total original configuration. At the same time, it is significant that such movements always retain enough touch with reality not to imply a complete return to the earlier conditions. Those elements of the current culture which are obviously superior to their earlier equivalents will be miraculously preserved. Thus in the Ghost Dance the millennium was to leave the Indians still in possession of rifles and metal cooking pots and, in some versions, of the White men's houses and stock.[30]

The main problem of the Dakota people in making the necessary adaptations and modifications was the constantly shifting policies of the federal government. In any generation a man might be expected to change his major interest, occupation, and place of residence a number of times. Just as soon as he was about to achieve a degree of successful adjustment to one government policy, a new one was suggested, and the whole effort was wasted. After a few disappointments he simply gave up the effort and lapsed into apathy toward any new suggestion.

The general goal of the acculturation process would seem to be to change the standards of family institutions in order to increase the

[30]Ralph Linton, *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes*, pages 518-519.

opportunities for individuals to more easily and fully assimilate American ideas. However, this goal should be tempered by two major considerations. First, practices should not be stamped out. For many they are the only possible way, and without them life becomes meaningless and tragic. Second, acculturation should be a two-way process. The best of Dakota culture could raise the level of American institutions and the virtues of individuals. The recommendations which are presented here are suggested on the basis of this qualified goal.

1. The unity of the kinship neighborhood should not be destroyed, since it is the most vital force on the reservation in keeping conflict at a minimum, preserving a value system that gives meaning to life, and preventing increased individual disorganization.

2. Permissive changes increase as opportunities are greater, and are more humane and reasonable than enforced changes which lead to resistance and apathy. The latter tends to destroy old values and is the negative process, while the former is the positive process of introducing new ideas which enrich the culture.

3. Effective informal leadership in the Pine Ridge community appears to be available for the introduction of new ideas, but the leaders cannot be coerced and they cannot coerce their people. They must be sought out and convinced that efforts directed toward such goals as improvements in levels of living are desirable for the welfare of the family group.

4. Nonconformity in some individuals appears to be a necessary noncomitant of innovation, and if it does not seriously interfere with other essential values, may be encouraged and protected in accordance with a reasonable degree of individual freedom.

5. Childhood education is unquestionably the most powerful force for change, if it is used to reconcile and facilitate the exchange of traits between the two culture systems. To accomplish this purpose the curriculum of non-Indian schools might include an extensive program for teaching the children to understand and appreciate the culture values of the American Indian.

6. Adult education programs are only a little less important than public schools in providing opportunities to the Pine Ridge people and their children. Changes are difficult enough to keep up with when individuals are full members of modern American society, but when they have the additional handicap of starting from a different cultural level, the education must be extended beyond the minimum in order to make it possible for others than a few exceptional people to accept gracefully a new culture pattern.

Additional study of the following recommendations would appear desirable:

1. Social equality might be provided to the Pine Ridge people in all of their non-reservation experiences. While people's attitudes can-

not be easily changed, equal employment and legal rights can be provided, and association and understanding may reduce attitudes of hostility.

2. Policies of the federal government might be more consistent and permissive. Over-administration and control of Indian affairs are as detrimental as complete neglect. Continuation and improvement of community services are essential, but the guiding principles of freedom and self-determination should be followed in the provision of services.

3. Preservation of the reservation way of life will continue and assimilation will be resisted, but conversely the Dakota culture will be modified by adjustment to change. It should be a major purpose of all programs and services to permit the Pine Ridge people to offer their distinctive contribution to America while integrating their social patterns into the life of the larger society.

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